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THE EDITORS

JOHN B. BRESLIN on Andre Dubus ♦ WILLIAM H. SHANNON on Thomas Merton

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CORRESPONDENCE

Who can preside at Mass?

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Unity in ritual

Omaha, Nebr.

To the Editors: An element basic to all human ritual seems largely to have been missed by all discussants of the Catholic Worker liturgy issue, ["Dear Friends," September 9]. The Milwaukee group cannot avoid ritualizing its commitment and its identity in some concrete, if symbolic way. And given the ecumenical character of the group, that ritual will have to be ecumenical as well. There should be no question about whether it will be effective liturgy. It will. But will it be Eucharist? Will it be Catholic? Here I must agree with both Zahn and Baldovin.

There is a thorny problem with which the Milwaukee group is struggling, at least implicitly. Even given a priest surplus, so long as none is involved in this group's work, how can he (or *she*, for that matter) authentically preside over its liturgy? Baldovin rightly stresses the importance of the unity of all the churches, ritualized in the Eucharist. It's a necessary condition of Catholic eucharistic liturgy. But not a sufficient one. The group must ritualize its specific way of following Christ before it can ritualize its unity with others. An outsider who "has faculties, will preside" is as close to the shepherd hireling Jesus talks about in the Gospel of John as we are likely to find. Such a presider can only symbolize the abstract unity of all the local groups, not the concrete reality over whose ritual he is presiding. At best this is incomplete, at worst, ritually ineffective.

How might this tension be resolved? One way is simultaneously to relax and to tighten the restrictions on ordination. Relax, in the sense of ordaining a presider from and for this group. And tighten, in the sense of rethinking and constricting absolute ordination (which the Council of Chalcedon condemned anyhow).

Timmerman defends his group's action in part on justice grounds. The approach is wrong in my view, for its concern is not the group, but the individual, i.e., the exclusion of this *individual* or this class of individuals from a role to which they have a putative *right*. While I can easily argue for a woman presider because the group needs to experience in its presidents the full spectrum of its humanity, or because this woman is the member of the group best qualified to preside over its ritual, I cannot do so on the grounds that this person (male *or* female) has a *right* to ordination apart from the needs of this community. That falls precisely into the error that plagues absolute ordination.

So, in my view, all three are at least partly right, if sometimes for the wrong reasons.

R.P. HEANEY

Freedom from constraints

Edwardsville, Ill.

To the Editors: How nice that theologian John F. Baldovin clarified for us [September 9] that theologically we, individually and collectively as a community, have the power and right through baptism to preside at the Eucharist and then to accuse those of us who do it of schism. Don Timmerman and Gordon Zahn were much more helpful. If you are so empowered by your community, do it. If not, then don't do it. We have the freedom of Christ who taught us not to be bound by the dumb and self-serving constraints of the institution.

ALBERT McHUGH, Ph.D.

Gathered in God's name

Piedmont, Calif.

To the Editors: As can be expected from most theological contributions to *Commonweal*, the level of John F. Baldovin's "Frustrating and Angering" [September 9] was succinct and methodically developed. A clear, gradual chippingaway over time at the Vatican's (note that I did not say the church's) intransigence seems to be one of the primary charters of theologians and other "professional" church-workers in this day and age. But where does that leave the vast majority of laypeople out here in the basic element of the church, the local assembly?

If we as Roman Catholics do belong to a eucharistic community and if that eucharistic emphasis is one of the most striking distinguishing characteristics by which we are singled out from the other Christian communities, what does this say to us when the eucharistic celebration is becoming very different or possibly a rare occasion in many of our assemblies? Theological hair-splitting aside, are we to go back to the "magical mystery moment" of pre-Vatican II theology regarding the consecration of the elements? Is God's gift of Self to the community to be dependent on the procedural idiosyncrasies imposed by a very small element of the People of God on the significantly larger membership? What if the reactionary element continues to prevail and the ordained clergy continues to diminish in number and dedication? Who can deny the action of the Holy Spirit in those communities which, in sheer desperation and desire for a meaningful Eucharist as opposed to the possibility of "Jesus via UPS," call out and recognize those indi-

(Continued on page 668)

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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXV, Number 21

Correspondence	642
Editorials	643
Oh, to be a Hoosier: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	646
Women who step forward: *Abigail McCarthy*	647
The future of Thomas Merton: *William H. Shannon*	649
Poetry: *Thomas Merton*	651
Playing out the patterns of sin & grace: *John B. Breslin*	652
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	656
BOOKS	
Critics' choices for Christmas: *Jane Howard, Andrew Sullivan, Emilie Griffin, Michael Dorris, Dan Wakefield, Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, Steven Englund, Chet Raymo, Molly Finn, Keith Burris, Janice Harayda, the Editors*	658

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A door swings shut, again

Any day now someone will announce for the New Hampshire primary. Will it be Jesse Jackson or Newt Gingrich? Who? Before that fearsome prelude to the 1992 campaign is upon us, one last shot at Campaign '88. The post-election bonhomie of George Bush strikes a false note following a campaign full of sham and evasion. Whatever course Mr. Bush sets out to achieve in the next four years will be shadowed by his distortion and misrepresentation of Michael Dukakis's record, a tactic that allowed him to veil his own agenda, avoid the hard questions, and box himself into a corner on new taxes. The fluctuations of the stock market, the continuing decline of the dollar, and Allen Greenspan's sharp warning about the budget deficit suggest that even Bush supporters have doubts about his willingness to face up to the exigencies of the national debt.

The most disheartening outcome of the election is the sense expressed by so many voters (especially the 50 percent who didn't show up at the ballot box) that for all the hoopla of a lengthy campaign the candidates failed to connect with their concerns. The electorate has good reason to feel cheated by the handlers and media advisers, speech teachers and political consultants—packagers aided and abetted by TV network sophistry. The anchors and their teams at CBS, NBC, and ABC (retire David Brinkley!) smugly insist that they were only reporting the news, but regular watchers of PBS know better—and they know more. Two PBS specials—Garry Wills's candidate profiles in late October and the election eve assessment with Roger Mudd and PBS staff—were genuinely helpful and informative. The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour rejected the sound bites and the spin doctors, balancing its coverage with generous chunks of the candidates' stump speeches; four-way debates between designated spokespersons for the candidates (knowledgeable congressional leaders plus experts, for example, on drug control, the environment, arms control) helped focus the real framework within which future legislative action is likely; and regular interviews with the voters individually and in groups. *Pace* the pundits, the electorate did not get the campaign it wanted or deserved.

But Mr. Bush it is—with the nation's prayers for his continuing good health.

Though the Democrats have won even firmer control of the Congress—for which Mr. Bush and the Republican party will pay dearly—the White House continues to elude them. Mr. Dukakis did better than Jimmy Carter in 1980 and Walter Mondale in 1984, including among Catholic voters. But better wasn't best. Perhaps it was the candidate himself and a campaign slow to define the issues; more likely, the fault lines within the Democratic party and among its constituent groups, including the old liberals and the new (see, David Carlin page 646), still prevent the emergence and nomination of a winnable presidential slate. Mr. Dukakis's defense of a woman's absolute right to choose an abortion, especially in view of his principled

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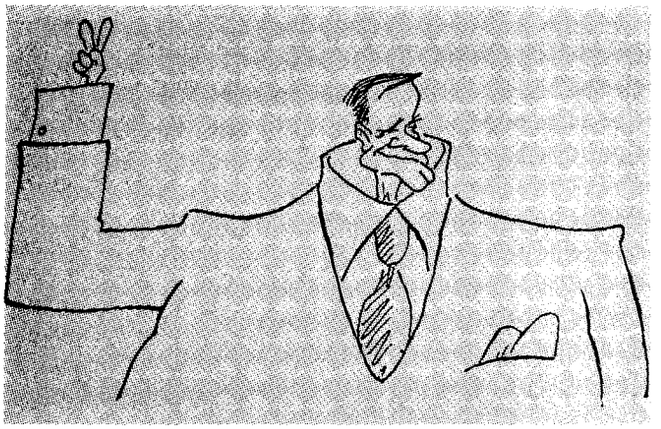

opposition to capital punishment, points to part of the problem, certainly for Catholics swayed by a consistent ethic of life. The Democrats need to reassess their loyalty to "cultural liberalism," parts of which might better go by their true name, "libertarianism." It is as political and economic liberals that Democrats once made their mark and their contribution. They ought to prepare themselves to do so again, after four years of George Bush.

A WINDOW OPENS, BRIEFLY

While the Bush adminstration divides up the appointment pie, it looks as if it may miss the delivery truck on its first foreign policy opportunity, the Middle East. The PLO has rarely offered an American president such an opportunity for fruitful intervention in its intractable conflict with Israel. The vote of the Palestine National Council (PNC) to accept UN Resolution 242 could be the first step in the long and so far elusive effort to bring peace to the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Israelis, the U.S. State Department, and many political commentators have been quick—too quick—to note the evasive wording of Yasir Arafat and the PNC declaration: Does it really recognize Israel? Does it really renounce terrorism? The State Department and the Bush transition team have said the wording does not meet U.S. requirements for direct talks with the PLO. Someone in Washington, perhaps George Shultz, perhaps Ronald Reagan, needs to signal a more positive reaction to what is a breakthrough, perhaps short-lived, in PLO thinking. What would be lost in the United States taking the declaration at face value as a positive statement upon which to begin exploring how far Mr. Arafat is willing to go? Not much, relative to the gains in deterring the Israelis and the Palestinians from the suicidal path they have been following at the bidding of their extremists; for the Israelis the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, for the Palestinians the destruction of the state of Israel. But just at the moment when the moderates seem to have won the vote in PLO councils, the Likud flirts with coalition partners who will push for annexation and perhaps expulsion of the Arabs from the occupied territories. The Israelis—preoccupied with the formation of a new government and the question of "Who is a Jew?"—need sober and hard-headed counsel from Washington, reminding them that it is the resolution of their political problems not their theological ones that will insure their survival. Mr. Bush would be foolish to miss this opportunity for intervention as a good friend and an honest broker.

REFUSING THE DRAFT

When the Vatican Congregation for Bishops issued its "Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences" this past spring (*Origins*, April 7), it was clear that the document was about power. The working paper dealt not only with the question of collegiality and the teaching authority of national conferences of bishops, but proposed to define just how these were to be understood as well as delineating the scope of their functions. It was evident that the Vatican officials who wrote the draft meant it to serve their own rather transparent purposes. The document thus came forth with a life and power of its own, one that Avery Dulles noted had to be taken quite seriously: "Everything depends on who will control the final version" (*America*, March 19).

At their recent meeting in Washington, the U.S. bishops reviewed the Vatican draft statement and found it deficient on historical, juridical, experiential, and thematic grounds. Taking a leading role within the universal college of bishops, they called for the complete revision of the document. This is an important step.

One of the most noteworthy achievements of Vatican II was the palpable experience of collegiality and the coresponsibility exercised by the bishops gathered in council. This in turn underscored and reinvigorated the ancient custom of regional episcopal bodies. Today, in over a hundred regions, bishops' conferences meet in relative concert to assist local bishops in their work and service. The sense of organic communion fostered in these bodies has been one of the most apparent, elating, and unanticipated effects of Vatican II.

"The Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences" noted a number of potential weaknesses in the present development of regional bishops' conferences. The U.S. bishops, in their detailed response, recognize the validity of a number of these important points. But in their own thorough background paper, they systematically point out the more serious failures of the Vatican working paper. The draft document had sought to drive a wedge between individual bishops, bishops' conferences, and the universal college of bishops teaching in union with the pope. In fact, in reading it, one cannot but be struck by the preemptive maneuvers to win approval of its positions; the unsubtle tactic of conquering by dividing; and the sowing of weeds amidst the church's own wheat.

The bishops of the United States, seeing the importance of

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this issue not only for themselves but for clergy and laity as well, have offered a substantial assessment and sound advice. In so doing, they have again demonstrated an ability to discern essential issues; to clarify and further discussion; and to do so in a spirit rich and responsive to the needs of the church as a whole.

EXPERIMENT WORTH TRYING

Doctors have predicted that by 1991, some 10,000 to 20,000 children under the age of thirteen will have AIDS, or will have died from it. That is a staggering increase over the sixty-four cases diagnosed five years ago and the 1,188 cases reported by October of this year. This explosive growth has turned policy-makers to the question of how to stop the spread of AIDS especially among newborn infants, who contract it from their mothers.

One attempt is New York City's needle-exchange program for drug addicts. By swapping new sterile needles for used ones the city hopes to reduce the spread of infection. To succeed, the program must supplant what is common practice among addicts: sharing used, unsterilized needles.

The program is based on a solid premise: that saving lives is possible, even if an addict continues to use intravenous drugs. Possibly the addict's own life may be spared, although it is estimated that half of New York City's 200,000 intravenous drug users already test HIV-positive. More probably, the lives of the addicts' spouses, lovers, and children could be spared.

Can a clean needle actually stop AIDS from spreading? Yes. European needle-swap programs attest to some success. New York's experiment will test whether a program can succeed here. The program is small-scale, restricted to 200 addicts on a waiting list for drug treatment programs and who turn in used needles to the city's health department headquarters in exchange for clean ones. There is no way to assure that the clean needles will not be shared, but since they are used in place of unsterilized needles, statistically, at least, they reduce the chances of exposure. However, amid much publicity and protest, few addicts have applied. That may be good news for those distressed that the city appears to be encouraging drug abuse. But it is bad news for those who support the government's attempt to provide a stopgap and one ounce of prevention in the face of a rapidly escalating, fatal disease.

Other states are trying to deal through the ballot box with the AIDS epidemic. Last month voters in California rejected, two to one, a proposal that would have required doctors to report to state health agencies anyone testing HIV-positive, and would have required carriers to provide the names of their sexual partners so that they might be traced and informed. The measure also would have allowed employers to administer AIDS tests to prospective employees. Despite a highly charged campaign, California voters rejected mandatory testing. In a previous editorial ["Testing for AIDS," July 17, 1987] we argued that such testing was counterproductive and called for "precisely targeted campaign(s) for voluntary testing among high-risk groups."

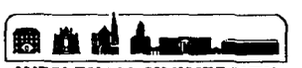
California voters did pass an initiative requiring that suspects in certain sex crimes and in assaults on emergency workers and police be tested for AIDS, a measure dictated by common sense as well as justice.

University Roman Catholic Chaplain

Wesleyan University seeks an ordained Roman Catholic priest to serve as University Roman Catholic Chaplain beginning July 1, 1989.

The University Roman Catholic Chaplain serves within the administration as part of the student services team, and is also an adjunct member of the Religion Department. In the latter role the Chaplain teaches one course each semester, typically on some aspect of the Roman Catholic faith and theological tradition. In the former role the Chaplain joins the Jewish and Protestant Chaplain in providing opportunities for members of the University community to engage the implications of their religious beliefs, their spiritual sensibilities, and their ethical values, so that they learn to use these resources of tradition, mind and spirit more effectively in their lives. As counselors to students and resources for student groups the Chaplains contribute to the enrichment of student life.

While a Ph.D is not required for this position, the degree is desirable, and applicants who have not received it must be otherwise academically qualified to teach in the Religion Department and participate in the intellectual life of the University. Candidates should send a letter of interest and resume to Mr. Edgar F. Beckham, Dean of College, **Wesleyan University**, Middletown, CT 06457-6027 by January 5, 1989.



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ET CETERA

ANOTHER CAMPAIGN El Salvador will be holding its elections on March 19, 1989. Ruben Zamora, secretary-general of El Salvador's Popular Social Christian party, recently visited New York to speak about the fateful possibilities that lay before his politically torn country. Zamora, a leading critic of both the ARENA and Christian Democratic parties, as well as of the U.S. military doctrine of low-intensity warfare in that country, is a marked man. For years he was forced to live abroad because of threats on his life. Now, as he told Gene Palumbo in a *Commonweal* interview (December 18, 1987), he has returned to Salvador to campaign openly for the Democratic Convergence, the left-of-center political coalition that plans to run candidates in the March election.

Zamora came to the U.S. not only with facts about the political, social, economic, and military deterioration of his country, but with a sobering prognosis of what to expect from a

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predicted ARENA victory next spring. Some members of the military and ARENA are already talking about a "Guatemala solution" for Salvador: one in which the Pentagon-inspired policy of low-intensity warfare would be superseded for a period by an all-out bloodbath of up to a hundred thousand Salvadoran guerrillas and those suspected of harboring sympathy for them—a prediction that gains credibility by the recent appointment of Col. René Emilio Ponce as Salvadoran chief-of-staff.

Zamora's mission: let the rest of the world know of this plan; draw the Salvadoran left into the electoral process in order to establish a genuine political opening in Salvador; and alert citizens of the U.S. to the high stakes involved at this juncture of Salvadoran history.

THE YANOMAMI A visitor to *Commonweal*'s office last spring alerted us to the struggle between the Yanomami Indians, the Brazilian army, and miners and prospectors in the Calha Norte, Brazil's northwestern frontier (May 20, 1988). Now a correspondent from the region writes that recent regulations implemented by FUNAI—the Brazilian equivalent of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs—have stripped the nine thousand Yanomami of three-quarters of their ancestral land and parceled out its remaining 2.3 million acres into nineteen distinct and unconnected areas. It would be hard to miss the intended purpose: the disruption of the bonds that constitute the tribe's fragile social fabric. Such a strategy may look like development to government functionaries in Brasilia, to land speculators, and to developers; but in the long run it will undercut the ground over which they greedily charge. FUNAI's policy spells the devastation of the aboriginal peoples and the Amazon rain forest, and, as our correspondent says, "the conscious genocide of the Yanomami."

ASK THE EXPERTS An alarming profile emerged from a recent report on property crime in the U.S.—a report that surveyed some 589 prison inmates (men and women) convicted of property crimes in Ohio. Over half (55 percent) of the crimes were committed by a mere 9 percent (mostly male) of the prisoners. Those who committed the most crimes began young, by age twelve. Early starters appear to be more difficult to deter—by alarm devices, dogs, lighting, locks and window bars, stiff sentencing, etc.—because they consistently ranked these "deterrents" as less effective than did other inmates. At the same time, early starters overestimated the probable return on crimes. For example, they consistently thought there was more money to be gained from burglaries and robberies than actual statistical averages show. They also rated rehabilitation programs as less effective in crime prevention than did the other offenders, suggesting they are less amenable to rehabilitation.

Overall, 33 percent of the inmates surveyed cited drugs and alcohol as their primary motive for crime. Job training and drug and alcohol education were mentioned as the most effective prevention, along with increased chances of conviction, imprisonment, and longer sentences. Women and blacks and those with shorter records showed the most susceptibility to deterrence and rehabilitative measures. Women were arrested for less serious crimes, committed fewer crimes, reported lower legal incomes, and were driven to crime more often by the need for money than by substance abuse, the leading motive for men.

The report, "The Business of Crime: The Criminal Perspective," was sponsored by Figgie International, Inc., a diversified company that includes some forty products—from sporting goods to key card access systems. This is the sixth in a series of public-interest reports on crime. The series was initiated over ten years ago when a friend of the corporation's chairman, Harry E. Figgie, Jr., was mugged and left permanently brain damaged.

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

OH, TO BE A HOOSIER

WHY THE DEMOCRATS KEEP LOSING

In the final weeks of the presidential campaign Michael Dukakis valiantly tried to live down the "L-word" by living up to it. Yes, he confessed (or rather, boasted), I'm a liberal—a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and John Kennedy. It was a nice try, but the trouble with this move was that the liberalism Bush had pinned on Dukakis wasn't the liberalism of the FDR-HST-JFK variety; it was rather the post-1968 liberalism in the tradition of George McGovern, the candidate who, appropriately enough, had taken only Massachusetts among fifty states in the 1972 election against Richard Nixon.

This is what the logic textbooks call *ignoratio elenchi:* the fallacy of triumphantly proving a point that isn't in dispute while ignoring the point that is in dispute. Paired with this fallacy was another, that of *equivocation*, as Dukakis used the term "liberalism" in a sense different from the sense given it in the Bush indictment. (Some might even say that Dukakis committed yet a third fallacy, the *ad misericordiam*, when he argued we should elect him president because Bush was unfairly picking on him.)

Of course Dukakis could in principle have attempted to turn the liberal charge to advantage by redefining liberalism. He could have said: "I'm an old-fashioned liberal, not a new-fangled one; I'm a liberal in the pre-1964 sense of the word, not the post-1968 sense." But how could he have said that in practice? He was the candidate of the national party that long ago passed from the old liberalism to the new. The old liberalism thought in terms of social class, its po-

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litical base being the working class and that class's near neighbors in the social hierarchy; the new liberalism thinks in terms of race and gender. The old liberalism was nationalistic, having led the nation through World War II and into the Cold War; the new liberalism is soft on nationalism, strong on cosmopolitanism. The old liberalism was sympathetic to traditional family values, its goal being to make it possible for a man (sic!) to support his wife and children; the new liberalism is radically individualistic, and when, from time to time, it proclaims itself to be pro-family, the word "family" covers a bewildering variety of institutional arrangements. (Talk about the fallacy of *equivocation!*) The fact is, it's too late in the day for Michael Dukakis or any other Democratic candidate for president to make a plausible renunciation of the newer liberalism.

Dukakis, however, was not trying to deceive anyone when, in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, he had declared that this presidential election should be about competence, not ideology. Dukakis is not an ideologue; he's a manager. In this respect he is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. But no one in politics is totally free of ideology; and to the extent that Dukakis has one, it is liberalism of the post-1968 type. Yet ideology is so secondary an issue for Dukakis that he was nonplussed when George Bush started beating him about the head and shoulders with the liberalism charge. "Why bother responding to such inconsequential attacks?" he seemed to think. "This election is about how to run USA, Inc., not about Willie Horton and the American flag."

The Bush campaign was shamefully demagogic, it is true, but its demagoguery was adroit. In attacking Dukakis, the Bush camp found just the right symbols to arouse the latent fear and loathing millions of Americans have for the newer school of liberalism. The Willie Horton issue told voters that liberals, in this respect latter-day disciples of Jean Jacques Rousseau, tend to believe in the innate goodness of human nature; otherwise why give a weekend pass to a nasty guy like that? The pledge of allegiance issue told voters that liberals, with their universalistic values, are at least a bit embarrassed by patriotic sentiment. And the ACLU issue told voters that liberals are enthusiasts for abortion, gay rights, and other manifestations of unlimited individualism.

Poor Michael Dukakis! Even though he made the second-best showing any Democrat has made in the last five presidential elections, he's being blamed for not having responded quickly enough to these attacks. But how could he respond? It was no answer to the Willie Horton issue to say that Massachusetts has a relatively low crime rate. It was no answer to the pledge issue to say, "How dare you impugn my patriotism!" And it was no answer to the ACLU issue to explain that that worthy organization has performed many fine services in the course of its long history, e.g., defending Nazis and even Republicans.

The only response that would have deflected the Bush attack was one along these lines: "I renounce the ACLU and all its pomps and all its works; and, oh God, how I love that grand old rag, that high-flying flag; and some people are just no damn good, so we ought to lock them up and throw away the key." For good measure Dukakis should have added: "My chief regret in life is that my father, when he left Greece and came to America, had the bad fortune to settle in so questionable a state as Massachusetts, thus forcing me to spend my formative years in what Bill Bennett has so well described as the moral filth of Brookline and Cambridge. Of course, my father's mistake is understandable, for in those days the commonwealth had a few redeeming features; for instance, it had the good sense to execute Sacco and Vanzetti. But how much better off I would have been if my father had gone directly from the Aegean to the Wabash, settling in an all-American state like Indiana. Then, like Dan Quayle, I too could have been a Hoosier, and not (God forgive me) a liberal."

In other words, there is no way Dukakis could have answered the liberalism charge. For the charge is true. And at least for the time being, liberalism—liberalism, that is, of the post-1968 variety—is a serious drag on Democratic candidates for president. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

WOMEN WHO STEP FORWARD

FASTING & THE POLITICS OF CARMEL

I recently reviewed Carolyn Heilbrun's *Writing a Woman's Life* (W.W. Norton) for another publication. It is a thought-provoking little book about the depiction of women in biography and autobiography. As is often the case with books with interesting theses, or with ideas which interact with my own, I find it coloring my thought about events in the news.

Columbia professor Heilbrun holds that the truthful telling of a woman's life—even the self-telling (and even the authentic living of it)—has been impossible until very recently because of the age-old view of woman's role. "Anonymity, we have long believed, is the proper condition of women," she says. To be a woman has meant "to put a man at the center of one's life and to allow to occur only what honors his prime position. Occasionally women have put God or Christ in the place of a man; the results are the same: one's own desires and quests are always secondary." Women have not been allowed ambition, self-realization, or the acquisition of power except under some disguise or other.

This was in my mind as I watched and read the news reports of Carol Fennelly, member of the Community for Creative Nonviolence, who narrowly escaped death from fasting during the last six

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weeks of the presidential campaign. She is the long-time companion and co-worker of Mitch Snyder, activist for the homeless, who has survived several such life-threatening fasts. As the result of one (during which he was supported by prominent government wives and film personalities) he extracted from President Reagan himself the promise of the renovation of a government building as a model shelter. The campaign fast was another attempt to focus attention on the homeless. It culminated in a march on the Capitol led by Snyder and Cher among others—by that time Carol Fennelly was too weak to join them.

Whatever we may think of the tactic of fasting to make or gain a point—at its best it is a kind of spiritual blackmail and, used too often, may promote callousness—it has sometimes been very effective, at least in the short run. To fast almost to death must require great courage, a strong will, steadfastness, and devotion to a cause—all traits exhibited by Carol Fennelly. But why, I wondered, did she join the fast herself this time after being a supportive figure for many years, nursing Mitch Snyder through one crisis after another, and content to act as his spokeswoman?

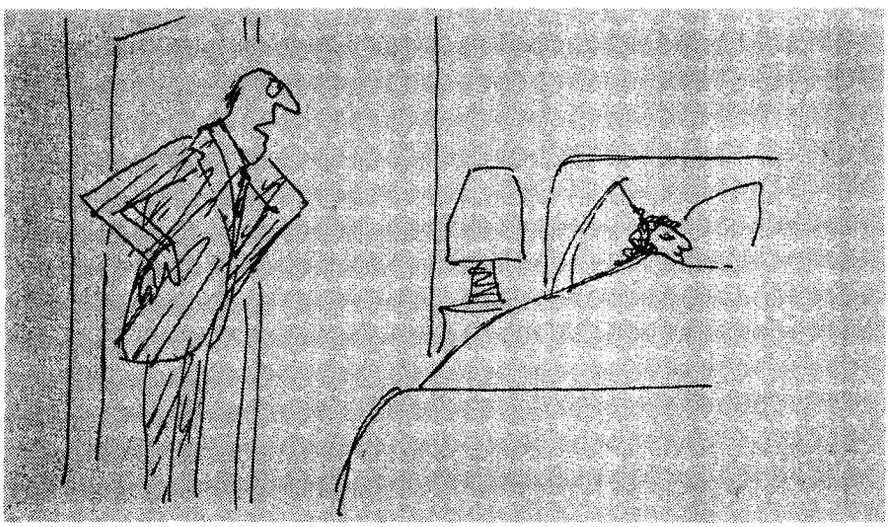
Fennelly says it was because it was time for women, especially mothers like herself, to step forward in the cause of the homeless. They must do so because the plight of homeless children is dire—they are living their whole lives in shelters, abandoned cars, slum-like motel rooms. Thus she felt she had to act. Sympathetic newspeople saw it a bit differently. They reported her as "stepping out from the shadow of Mitch Snyder" and asserting leadership for women in the cause. The impulse to personal accomplishment and leadership is almost always, Heilbrun asserts, depicted in the self-telling of women's stories, as the response to a spiritual call "to an accomplishment and an achievement in no other way excusable in a female self."

Fennelly's story recalls another thesis of Heilbrun's—that women seeking spiritual achievement discover themselves through identification with some "other." "Identity is grounded through the relation to the chosen other." Certainly Fennelly became an activist as a follower of Snyder. There are very interesting parallels here in the stories of saintly women. But here I would quarrel with Heilbrun about her use of the word "occasionally" in saying that occasionally women have put God or Christ in the place of a man in their lives. Literally hundreds and thousands of women have done so and many lived lives of heroic accomplishment as a result. If one is to reexamine the telling of women's lives, the stories of the saints, canonized or not, are a wonderfully fertile source of exploration.

Actually a very good start at exploring this source has already been done by Phyllis McGinley in *Saint-Watching*. She limned strong women like Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Siena and Mère Jahouvey. She also included a fascinating and sophisticated study of the attachments between many men and women saints—"the comradeship between men and women geniuses." She lists such famous pairs as Benedict and Scholastica, Paula and Jerome, Clare and Francis of Assisi, Jeanne de Chantal and Francis de Sales, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, etc. And in not all of them is the woman the follower. In every case, however, McGinley argues that each one of the pair would have been less without the other. A second look at the women's stories in these pairs is now due.

Another theme of Heilbrun's is that the part other women play in any one woman's story is seldom told. She thinks of this omission primarily in terms of women's friendships and of supportive groups of women. Still another theme is the issue of power and control in women's lives. Exactly because they bring these two themes together, it would seem to me that the study of religious communities, only recently initiated by women historians, is another very fertile source. These communities, like women's colleges and women's organizations, may be subcultures, but their study will illuminate the stories of women.

The above was borne home to me by the headlines about the disputes at the Morristown Carmel where five nuns barricaded themselves in the infirmary in protest against their new superior. Shades of St. Teresa sent to be prioress at the convent of the Incarnation! "When . . . she entered the choir, an angry group attempted to bar her way. Some cried out against her; others for her. The pandemonium was increased when some of her supporters attempted to sing the *Te Deum* and the rest shouted them down" (Peers, *Mother of Carmel*). When we think of the further insights into the politics of Carmel, of which we catch glimpses in the story of Thérèse of Lisieux, we can only wonder, as Heilbrun evidently does, whether women would really prefer, as many claim they do, "a world without evident power or control." It is worth looking into. □



"Hey, women's movement, it's eight-thirty."

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THE FUTURE OF THOMAS MERTON

SORTING OUT THE LEGACY

WILLIAM H. SHANNON

In 1961 Monsignor Capovilla, private secretary to Pope John XXIII, wrote to Thomas Merton that the pope had been "impressed" by a November 11 letter in which Merton had linked the American war effort with the national industrial economy—a relationship that Pope John himself later picked up in *Pacem in terris*. Capovilla added that, "as I go down to the pope's apartment, I see your books there *'L'une après l'autre.*'"

- In that same year Merton became an outspoken critic of nuclear war and joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation.
- In 1964, Ripu Daman Lama, an Indian student in Poland, wrote to Merton that he was studying mining engineering in the university at Cracow and had become involved with a group of Catholic intellectuals. He tells the monk of Gethsemani that Merton's name was frequently on the lips of the students, with whom Lama discussed such topics as philosophy and the growing atheism of the day. He asked Merton to send him some books.
- That same year the curator of the special collections at the library of Syracuse University wrote to Merton informing him that they were "endeavoring to acquire and preserve the correspondence and files of well-known creative writers such as you." Merton's response—a gift of notebooks and other materials—now constitutes a relatively substantial Merton file in the university's special collections.
- In 1964, Thomas Merton had a meeting at Columbia University with D.T. Suzuki, the noted Zen scholar, who called Merton one of the best interpreters of Zen to the Western world.
- Amiya Chakravarty, a Hindu scholar and friend who visited at Gethsemani and later accompanied Merton on part of his Asian journey, told Merton that his writings were known and liked by the renowned Hindu scholar, Dr. Radhakrishnan.
- In 1988, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, the book that forty years ago brought instant fame to its monk-author, was published in Chinese. It has sold over a million copies in English and has been translated into Japanese, as well as into eleven European languages. Some of Merton's other books have also been translated into Vietnamese, Korean, and Tamil. At least a dozen are available in most Western European languages.
- In September 1988, Sister Mary Luke Tobin, a friend of Merton, went to Hungary to speak about him. After her talk, a member of the audience showed her a copy, in Hungarian, of *Thoughts in Solitude* and confided that he and his wife had taken it with them on their honeymoon!

I link these disparate events and facts because they are all points of entry into one of the remarkable religious phenomena of the twentieth century: the man who was monk and hermit at the Abbey of Gethsemani, Thomas Merton. These are pieces of a mosaic—and there are many more—which, despite the laudable efforts of several biographers, has yet to be put together into an image that brings out the colors and richness of the original, while evoking the wholeness of the man who was Thomas Merton.

This essay is not an attempt to make the "true face" of Thomas Merton emerge. Rather, I want to look at some of the pieces of that mosaic and ask: Are the pieces worth saving? Is his writing of enduring significance or is it destined for a library graveyard a few decades down the road? Merton's writings, which deeply touched the lives of multitudes of people in his lifetime, seem, twenty years after his death, to exercise an ever expanding influence on a whole new generation. Still, as literary immortality goes, twenty years is a short time. Will the Merton charism continue to move women and men in the third millennium?

Only time will give a definitive answer. Still, we can sometimes contribute to the shaping of the answer. We can also consider evidence that will impinge on our judgment. In this article I want, first, to take an evaluative look at Merton's literary output as well as the explosion of books, articles, and dissertations he has inspired. Second, assuming that consideration of this whole Merton corpus builds a strong case that his works deserve to survive, I will suggest what I think are the directions in which future Merton studies ought to move. Even as I set myself these goals, I realize that the first is more the

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beginning of a long project than an article, and that the second will put me on a limb that, it may well be, other Merton scholars will want to saw off.

In considering the Merton literary output, one is amazed by the sheer quantity of it. That a monk, whose daily life was fairly rigorously regulated by a monastic routine that gave him only limited time for writing, should produce more than forty books and some sixty or more journals and reading notebooks, a thousand pages of poetry and upwards of 4,000 letters, boggles the mind. Of course, sheer quantity establishes no claim to lasting survival and not everything Merton wrote deserves to survive, as he himself recognized. In 1967, Merton did a self-evaluation of thirty-one of his books. Using six categories (ranging from "Best" to "Awful"), he lists fourteen as "Better," six as "Good," six as "Fair," three as "Poor." For the categories "Bad" and "Awful," he has one each. He lists none of his works as a "Best." I would venture to say that "devotional" and "inspirational" works (like *The Living Bread,* which Merton classifies as "Poor") are destined for literary demise. But there are other books that, while addressing the concrete circumstances of his own time with clarity and authenticity, have a quality of insight into the human condition that transcends his own generation.

My tentative list would begin with *The Seven Storey Mountain,* a smash hit in 1948, which sold 600,000 copies in its first year and continues year after year to attract readers. If one accepts T.S. Eliot's rather pragmatic definition of a "classic" as "a work that stays in print," The *Mountain* has met the test for forty years, and all the signs point to continued popularity. I would also include *New Seeds of Contemplation* (a far better book than its predecessor, *Seeds of Contemplation)* and the Merton journals: *The Sign of Jonas* (a favorite of so many Merton readers), *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (not actually a single journal, but made up of items from journals covering the period 1956-65), and the recently issued *The Vow of Conversation* (a journal of 1964-65). My list would include a fairly large sampling of Merton's letters (in which his humanity shines in both its greatness and its weakness); healthy selections from his poetry; and essays. To give one example of the latter: "Philosophy of Solitude" in *Disputed Questions* is a superb study of a fundamental need that women and men of every age and place have experienced.

Merton's works, if they survive, will do so because of their autobiographical character. In some sense practically everything he wrote is in one way or another autobiographical. Merton himself realized this aspect of his writing. As early as 1949, he recorded in his journal: "Every book I write is a mirror of my own character and conscience." I believe that it is this autobiographical strain that draws and will continue to draw people to his writings.

I stress the importance of the autobiographical thrust of Merton's writings because so many readers around the world are able to identify their story with his—a human person struggling to find meaning and to confront the absurdity that life so often appears to be. Merton knew loneliness and alienation. His clay feet are visible for us to see. Like ourselves he had attachments of which he had to rid himself and illusions he had to unmask. No wonder that, as his books mirrored his "own character and conscience," his readers found themselves mirrored as well.

But the fact that we find our stories in his does not, of itself, offer sufficient reason why his writing ought to survive. There are other people with whom we can identify in a shared humanness. What makes the difference with Thomas Merton are the special gifts he had: a deep wisdom and a marvelous facility with words. He could reach into the human heart and surface for his readers questions that, till they read him, lay hidden and unasked, struggling for expression. Though Merton was not a creative thinker, he was a creative synthesizer: he knew how to raise to a new level of understanding people's perception of God, prayer, and human life.

In short, Merton is a person who, through his writings, enters into conversation with you. He tells about himself and you see not only yourself, but every person. He writes autobiography and *we* find biography—our own. He digs so deeply into raw humanity that his words will reach women and men for ages to come.

It is perhaps no accident that in the last year of his life, Merton was much occupied with reflection on transculturation, whereby a person transcended a particular culture by being at home in all cultures. Thomas Merton was received into the Roman Catholic church on November 16, 1938. He became a citizen of the United States on June 22, 1951. But Merton does not belong to the Roman Catholic church. Nor does he belong to the U.S. The religious traditions of a whole humanity filtered through his fertile mind and enriched his own faith with an ever expanding catholicity. The lives and destinies of humanity touched his person and made him, as far as this is possible, a world citizen.

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Besides Merton's own literary output, there are the works which his writings have inspired: books, articles and dissertations (111 of them!). Merton's classification of his own books may appropriately be applied to these. This would reveal a rather uneven picture and not an especially happy one: very few works that could be called "Better" and perhaps a reasonable number of "Good"; but all too many would qualify only as "Fair," "Poor," "Bad," or even "Awful." This may seem like a harsh evaluation, but I am convinced that Merton deserves better treatment than he has so far received. I also have the feeling that many of my colleagues would agree that Merton scholarship is still in its infancy or at best in adolescence.

What ought to be the future direction of Merton studies? The first task is the publication of what is as yet unpublished: journals, letters, and taped talks. There are four journals, 1956-68, that by Merton's will were restricted from publication for twenty-five years after his death. These can be published in 1993. There are more than sixty other journals and reading notebooks, which contain valuable material and, with careful editing ought to be published in conjunction with the restricted journals. There will be no great surprises or new revelations when the remaining journals are published. They were available to Merton's authorized biographer, Michael Mott, who gives generous excerpts from them.

Only the first of five projected volumes of letters has so far appeared. Called *The Hidden Ground of Love*, it includes more than 700 letters on religious experience and social concerns. The second volume (called *The Road to Joy*, letters to family, friends, young people, etc.) should be in print by the spring of 1989. The third volume (on monastic renewal and spiritual direction) is near completion in typescript, and the fourth (dealing with Merton's contacts with poets and other writers) is in preparation. Volume five of the letters will include correspondence that did not fit the other volumes; it will also contain a chronology of all of Merton's letters and an extensive index.

Finally, there are hundreds of taped talks. Many were intended for a limited audience within the monastery and need judicious editing. A number of such tapes, recently published, show little sign of editing and project a mediocrity onto Thomas Merton that is both misleading to readers and unfair to him.

Besides these three areas, there is a good bit of unpublished material dealing with the monastic life (for example, notes Merton used with the young monks he taught). These would have only restricted appeal and probably will not be published.

A critical study, or even a critical edition, of *The Seven Storey Mountain* is very much needed. This is the book that "launched" Merton's career as a writer. Much of what he writes later flows out of the metaphors, symbols, and reflections found in that book. It is a young monk reflecting on a young man's life and in some ways setting a future agenda: metaphors he was to live out and develop further, as well as others that later he would reject.

The Merton poetry exists in somewhat unmanageable form: a huge volume of over a thousand pages, with no introduction or notes. A fair amount of it is mediocre or just plain bad, but one will also find fine poetry there. A valuable Merton project would be to make a discriminating selection from among the eight poetry collections (1940-63). Such a selection of the best poetry, with an introduction and critical notes, would open up

Thomas Merton

ELEGY FOR A TRAPPIST

(Fr. M. Stephen, O.C.S.O.)

Maybe the martyrology until today
Has found no fitting word to describe you
Confessor of exotic roses
Martyr of unbelievable gardens

Whom we will always remember
As a tender-hearted careworn
Generous unsteady cliff
Lurching in the cloister
Like a friendly freight train
To some uncertain station

Master of the sudden enthusiastic gift
In an avalanche
Of flower catalogues
And boundless love.

Sometimes a little dangerous at corners
Vainly trying to smuggle
Some enormous and perfect bouquet
To a side altar
In the sleeves of your cowl

In the dark before dawn
On the day of your burial
A big truck with lights
Moved like a battle cruiser
Toward the gate
Past your abandoned and silent garden

The brief glare
Lit up the grottos, pyramids and presences
One by one
Then the gate swung red
And clattered shut in the giant lights
And everything was gone

As if Leviathan
Hot on the scent of some other blood
Had passed you by
And never saw you
Hiding among the flowers.

Commonweal, December 9, 1966

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Merton's least-known writings. His last two volumes of poetry, *Cables to the Ace* and *The Geography of Lograire*, could receive the same treatment, but as individual works complete in themselves.

A similar selection of important essays could be made, again with proper critical notes and introduction. This would be of special value to the growing number of teachers who offer courses on Merton, or to people who would like to indulge themselves in a "home" study. Of value might be an updated revision of *The Thomas Merton Reader* or a new reader that would offer a representative selection of Merton writing, including some of the posthumously published works.

These are but a brief sampling of possible directions in which Merton scholarship and publishing might move. Thematic studies have been done, especially in dissertations, but these will best be done when all the Merton material is finally published.

An important priority for Merton scholars is to establish more contact between specialists in religious studies, theology, or spirituality and specialists in literature. Some time ago I was talking with a friend who is a teacher of literature and a highly respected scholar in the field of nineteenth-century Romantic poetry. In the course of our conversation, he said: "We people in literature do not take Thomas Merton seriously." My suggestion was that maybe they should. It is unfortunate that Merton has been seen as the almost exclusive "possession" of people in the field of religion and spirituality. Some Merton scholars are in the field of literature, but not enough. There is a need for discussions between the various disciplines. Only then can we address an important question: is Merton to be classified as a "religious" writer, with the inevitable restrictions that such a classification would impose in terms of potential readers, or is he a figure in American literature and one to be reckoned with, at that? □

PLAYING OUT THE PATTERNS OF SIN & GRACE

THE CATHOLIC IMAGINATION OF ANDRE DUBUS

JOHN B. BRESLIN

"I am fifty-one years old, yet I cannot feel I am growing older because I keep repeating the awakening experience of a child: I watch and I listen, I write in my journal, and each year I discover, with the awe of my boyhood, a part of the human spirit I had perhaps imagined, but had never seen or heard."

Thus the narrator of "Rose," the concluding story in Andre Dubus's collection (1986), *The Last Worthless Evening*. (See p. 655 for list of publishers and varied collections of Dubus's short stories.) At some risk to my critical credentials, I find that narrative voice remarkably close to its author's and revelatory of the imagination that stands behind a considerable body of work published over the past two decades. Dubus began by publishing a full-length novel in 1967 that grew out of his studies at the Iowa writers' school and, more to the point, out of his experience in the Marines. *The Lieutenant* has only recently come back into print, thanks to a small publisher in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Since 1967 Dubus has concentrated on shorter forms, stories and novellas of varying lengths, five collections worth, and a separately published short novel, *Voices from the Moon*. Whatever the form or the setting, however, the watching eye and the attentive ear are always in evidence, and with them the shock of discovery. Dubus picks his venues carefully, each reflecting his own lived experience: Catholic schools in Louisiana; the male-dominated world of the military; and, more recently, the Merrimack Valley northwest of Boston, an uneasy meeting point of town and gown amid the rubble of obsolete mills and factories. What they have in common for the reader is an assurance of authenticity, not just for the places, with their *bayous* or ward rooms or desolate winter roads, but more importantly for the troubled human beings—Dubus's stock in trade—who with their distinctive accents, prejudices, and graces, attempt to puzzle out the meanings of the lives they've been dealt and have frequently messed up.

A consciousness of sin permeates the atmosphere of these stories, which is not surprising in a writer who answers, "Catholic," when asked for a proper adjective to describe his work. Dubus accepts our flawed condition as a given, but he manages to view his characters' failings with a compassion that bespeaks an equal conviction that grace is powerfully at work in the world. In a number of stories this pattern of sin and grace is played out within a specifically Catholic setting, but just as often, the characters have no religious convictions or, at most, exhibit a vestigial sensibility of the divine in lives otherwise determined by an overtly secularized culture. But moral questions remain, questions shaped and colored by

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family values, ethnic heritage, military ethos, and intellectual training. And it is to these moral issues that Dubus relentlessly returns, exploring their demands and their paradoxes in the lives of middle Americans of the mid-twentieth century.

Take Dan Tierney, the hero of Dubus's first novel, *The Lieutenant*. Thrust into the command of the Marine detachment on an aircraft carrier, Lieutenant Tierney gets caught up in an attempt to save a weak young recruit from his perverted tormentors, only to find his efforts are futile against the engine of military justice and a naval captain's determination to clear his ship, and his command record, of any sexual taint. Tierney's insistence on following his conscience sabotages his own career.

Like many first novels, it is a story of innocence lost, and it suffers from the genre's neat moral divisions of heroes and villains. But it sounds themes that Dubus will pick up and develop in his later and more sophisticated treatments of military life. One of these is the deep resentment felt by regular officers against the faceless and powerful intelligence arm of the military, the "dark men" of a later story. In both cases they violate the unspoken covenant that binds servicemen together, embodying in its place the impersonal force of authority that values order above all else. Dubus's sympathies clearly lie with someone like Captain Devereaux who warns his pilot friend of the investigation into his personal life. The competing values are neatly summarized as the investigators stand with the captain on the flight deck of his carrier and he informs them that their prey is not on board:

"He's out there..."

"Out there?" Foster said. "You let him fly? In a million dollar..."

Captain Devereaux looked at him, and he stopped.

This subversive, anarchic strain runs through many of these stories, and not just the military ones. Dubus's characters are apt to take the law into their own hands to avenge or protect family or friend. He makes no abstract moral judgment on these tribal loyalties, and it is clear that the psychic price of such action comes high. As the man who has just murdered his son's murderer in "Killings" tells the story to his wife, "the words had no images for him, he did not see himself doing what the words said he had done; he only saw himself on the road." And later, as his wife sleeps besides him, "he shuddered with a sob that he kept silent in his heart." Whether or not the murder is even discovered, Matt has been marked, like Cain.

Perhaps the most powerful of these stories of private judgment—and Dubus's best in my estimation—is also one of his most explicitly Catholic. "A Father's Story," in *The Times Are Never So Bad*, gives us the first-person account of Luke Ripley, the divorced owner of a stable, who spends an hour early each morning in prayer and random reflection on his life before he rides off on one of his horses to the local church where, with his good friend Father Paul and a handful of others, he celebrates Mass. This daily pattern, Luke

John Breslin's critical essay on Andre Dubus is another in our series of articles on contemporary Catholic writers of fiction. We have asked our essayists to give an overview of an author's works, showing our readers where and how this writer locates the central human drama, the big questions, the religious crisis of our time. What does the Catholic sensibility of an Andre Dubus have to tell us about our common world, about the state of our souls?

feels, brings him as close to his center as he has even been, but he has no illusions about mysticism or holiness. In his awareness of the gap between intention and accomplishment he captures the genius of sacrament and ritual, the essence of the Catholic imagination:

> But I cannot achieve contemplation, as some can; and so, having to face and forgive my own failures, I have learned from them both the necessity and the wonder of ritual. For ritual allows those who cannot will themselves out of the secular to perform the spiritual, as dancing allows the tongue-tied man a ceremony of love.

Into this calm comes the shock of family disaster. During her annual summer visit Luke's twenty-year-old daughter, Jennifer, accidentally hits someone with her car on a dark road and returns to wake Luke in the middle of the night. What he does, he does instinctively to protect his daughter. But the story is told retrospectively, and so at each stage—as he drives to the scene, finds the body, returns to tell her the boy is dead, and finally smashes the damaged fender into a tree at church—we hear as well his reflections, his awareness that efforts to spare Jennifer count also as sins against the boy and his family: "my first sin against him, not stopping for Father Paul, who could have given him the last rites, and immediately then my second one, or, I saw then, my first, not calling an ambulance to meet me there." Later still, he rehearses the confession he will never make to his priest-friend, because he knows he would not act on his advice to go to the police: "He will not hear anything of failure to do all that one can to save an anonymous life, of injustice to a family in their grief, of deepening their pain at the chance and mystery of death by giving them nothing—no one—to hate."

But what is most extraordinary about this story is its ending, and the risk Dubus takes in having Luke recount a dialogue with God from his morning reflections. Distinguishing between his sons and his daughter, he tells God he would have called the police if one of his boys had come to him, but would do again what he did for his daughter. "But you never had a daughter and, if you had, you could not have borne her pas-

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sion." To God's further accusation that he therefore loves weakness, Luke responds. "As you love me," and heads out to saddle his horse for Mass.

At a reading Dubus gave of the story several years ago, a friend of mine heard him say that a young woman had told him, "Daughters have stories, too." That reaction echoed several I heard from women of various ages when I taught the story in class. They felt that Luke had done his daughter more harm than good in trying to protect her, but fathers of daughters also told me that even if they did not approve of Luke's decision, they understood it. Dubus has clearly touched a live nerve in our sexually egalitarian society; it is a tribute to the power of his writing, however, that the story is never mistaken for a tract. It remains Luke Ripley's narrative—credible, even sympathetic, because Dubus has made Luke that way.

In the later novel, *Voices from the Moon*, Luke Ripley turns up again, this time in a bit part as the stable owner on whose horses young Richie Stowe experiences a merging of body and spirit remarkably similar to Ripley's own: "He had learned to make his spiritual solitude physical and, through his flesh, to do this in communion with the snow and evergreens, and the naked trees that showed him the bright sky of winter."

Indeed, Richie is in many ways a twelve-year-old version of Luke; he, too, finds in daily Mass the same centering; and he, too, is caught up in a family drama, but one largely out of his control. What is tearing the Stowe family apart is the divorced father's decision to marry the ex-wife of Richie's older brother Larry—a plot line that skirts dangerously close to soap opera, and is only saved by Dubus's ability to give each of the characters involved an individual voice and a history that in conjunction make for a dialogue of generations. Family bonds, however, shredded by divorce, remain strong enough to lend credence to the mother's prediction that Larry and his father will eventually be reconciled.

Meanwhile, Richie is undergoing his own personal testing which provides the narrative frame for the novel. Coming home from Mass, in the first chapter, he meets Melissa Donnelly who smokes and seems otherwise worldly and alluring to the young priest-to-be. In the final chapter, after we have seen each member of the Stowe family at his or her most vulnerable, Richie goes out to meet Melissa for an innocent tryst that he imagines as a major temptation against his religious calling. But Dubus leaves the matter much more ambiguous in the novel's final words: "(Richie) saw in the stars the eyes of God too, and was grateful for them, as he was for the night and the girl he loved. He lay on the grass and the soft summer earth, holding Melissa's hand, and talking to the stars."

Certainly Richie's confessor, who early in the novel counsels the boy to have compassion and forgiveness for his father ("even if it *is* wrong, it's still love, and that is always near the grace of God"), would not see Melissa as a competitor to Christ. Dubus treats the demands of Catholicism seriously and refuses to reduce religious experience to good feelings, but just as firmly he rejects Jansenism and its world-denying instincts. Human love may be fractured, sometimes even a distorted mirror for God's grace, but it remains for us here and now the only glass to see through darkly.

Which brings me to a final group of three interlocked stories that appear in different collections. Dubus explores the permutations of human love in the lives of two couples joined and divided by friendship and sexual appetite. Here, too, Dubus risks the low comedy possibilities of "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice" by focusing his stories on the sexual tribulations of four middle-class inhabitants of a Massachusetts college town. Hank Allison and Jack Linhart teach together, run together, and genuinely think of themselves as each other's best friend. ("There are several men I love and who love me, all of us married, passive misogamists, and if we did not have each other to talk to we would probably in our various ways go mad.") But as the first story, "We Don't Live Here Anymore," opens, Jack is having an affair with Hank's wife, Edith, for which he feels the guilt of betrayal though he knows that Hank rejects monogamy in principle and has had numerous affairs with his female students. And by the story's end Jack's wife, Terry, has reciprocated by sleeping with Hank. These transpositions are important elements of plot, but the story is Jack's as he struggles to comprehend his own deepest drives and frustrations. What does it mean to be married to a woman who continues to love him when his own passion has died? Is being a father enough to hold such a marriage together? Jack shares Hank's doubts about the value of monogamy and is willing to experiment with an alternative, but he lacks his friend's deep cynicism: "*There are two kinds of people*, Hank said. *The unhappy ones who look it and the unhappy ones who don't.*" In the end Jack decides to stay with Terry for reasons he intuits but can't express.

For the other two stories ("Adultery" and "Finding a Girl in America") the focus shifts to Edith and Hank, but without the first-person narration that made Jack Linhart both more puzzling and more immediate. Dubus uses "Adultery" as the

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title of the collection in which it originally appeared but wryly appends "& Other Choices." These three words suggest a subtle commentary on the moral issue behind the erotic entanglement, yet also turn aside heavy-handed moralizing. We become what we choose, Dubus insists, and nowhere more so than in our loving. For a while Edith believes she can accept Hank's philandering and match it; and he wants to believe that by condoning her affairs he will achieve a guiltless freedom. But Edith, like Jack Linhart, cannot finally separate sexual love from commitment, and when she falls in love with a forty-year-old ex-priest named Joe Richie, who is dying of cancer, she begins to realize the hollowness of her marriage.

Dubus divides "Adultery" into four parts, using the love story to frame Edith's reflections on her life with Hank in the long second section. The effect is to make of her deepening love for Joe a prism through which both Edith and the reader can perceive her need to act even though her choice to divorce Hank offers no consolation since Joe will soon be dead.

Joe himself is another of Dubus's overtly religious creations, a near relation of both Luke Ripley and Richie Stowe, who finds in the Eucharist a symbol and center for all his loves. Because he experiences something sinful in his relationship with Edith (though not the simple *fact* of adultery), he stops receiving Communion. Were she to divorce Hank and marry him, Joe would return to the sacrament. There is a casuistry here, but one of symbol rather than of law, that parallels Luke Ripley's bold concluding dialogue in "A Father's Story" with his daughter-less God. Joe, too, "loves in weakness," but the love proves strong enough to free Edith from Hank's loveless marriage arrangement with her. She recognizes that her ability to leave Hank is Joe's final gift to her, just as her announcement of it as he lies dying is her gift to him.

The conclusion of the trilogy is, fittingly, Hank's. "Finding a Girl in America" opens with him apparently in the midst of still another affair with one of his students: "On an October night, lying in bed with a nineteen-year-old and tequila and grapefruit juice, thirty-five-year-old Hank Allison gets the story." And it is not a pretty one. He has been, without his knowledge, the father of an aborted child from a previous affair. The image of that fetus haunts his waking and sleeping hours, forcing him to face the consequences of his own choices. "I don't want to have to say no to anything, not ever": the life philosophy he had enunciated for Edith when she first discovered his infidelities has borne this terrible fruit.

Coming to terms with that reality is the burden of the story, and Dubus nicely rounds off the trilogy by having us see Hank deal with it by turning to the central people in his life—Edith, Jack, his thirteen-year-old daughter Sharon, and Lori, the girl at the beginning of the story. Joined together by their daughter, Edith and Hank have achieved reconciliation in their divided lives, and she is able to offer him comfort in his grief as well as forgiveness. Jack tells him to marry Lori, and his encouragement has the added weight of someone who has refused to give up on his own marriage. Watching Sharon with Lori, Hank realizes that "he does not want her girlhood and young womanhood to become a series of lovers, he does not want her to become cynical and casual about making love. He does not, in short, want her to be like his girlfriends."

But he also knows that Lori is not like his other girlfriends, either. She may be the latest of his student mistresses, but by story's end he has determined that she will also be the last, and he asks her to marry him with all the trepidation of a young man courting his love. The circle has been completed, not so innocently, perhaps, as at the end of a Shakespearean comedy with all the young couples neatly paired off, but with enough resolution and reconciliation to give us hope, and some comfort for the pain suffered on the journey to self-knowledge.

The comic vision implied in this trilogy, and in Andre Dubus's work in general, is profoundly Christian, and, more specifically, profoundly Catholic in inspiration. Dubus looks at the world around him and sees sin and brokenness, but he refuses to despair. For behind the physical detail his eye so sharply sees and behind the psychological nuance his ear so deftly notes, he perceives a presence that understands and forgives us more generously than we do others and better than we can ourselves. For those characters with a sensitivity to sign and sacrament (Luke, Richie, Joe) that presence finds a local habitation and a name in the Eucharist where the mystery of God-in-flesh continues daily to play itself out. For the rest there are hints and guesses, mostly in moments of vulnerability

Books By Andre Dubus

Here are, in order of publication, the stories mentioned in the essay.

The Lieutenant. *Dial Press, 1967, reissued by The Green Street Press (PO Box 1957, Cambridge, MA 02338), 1986, $7.95, 256 pp.*

Separate Flights. *Godine, 1975, $8.95, 216 pp.* ["We Don't Live Here Anymore"]

Adultery & Other Choices. *Godine, 1977, $10, $8.95 paper, 192 pp.* ["Adultery"]

Finding a Girl in America. *Godine, 1980, $13.95, $7.95 paper, 192 pp.* [Title story, "Killings," "The Dark Men"]

The Times Are Never So Bad. *Godine, 1983, $14.95, 192 pp.* ["A Father's Story"]

Voices from the Moon. *Godine, 1984, $12.95, 160pp. Crown, $6.95 paper*

We Don't Live Here Anymore. *Crown, 1984 $7.95, 279 pp.* [This is a reissue of four novellas from earlier collections including all three of the stories described as a trilogy in the article, plus "The Pretty Girl."]

The Last Worthless Evening. *Godine, 1986, $15.95, 214 pp.* ["Rose"]

Selected Stories. *Godine, 1988, $22.50, 476 pp.*

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when their deepest loves and loyalties are threatened: Edith at Joe's deathbed, Hank worrying about his teenage daughter, Captain Devereaux protecting his old friend. The grace that Bernanos's curé found to be everywhere and in everything often works strangely, even paradoxically, in a world hell-bent on denying its presence, but work it does, quietly and inexorably, not to save us from pain and suffering but to give them meaning by rescuing faith, hope, and love from our icy despair or lukewarm diffidence.

By watching and listening and, most of all, by writing, Andre Dubus continues to celebrate the human spirit in which it is possible, he insists, to see the power of God and God's grace at work. He is a writer who needs and deserves a wider audience. The recent bestowal on him of a MacArthur Fellowship acknowledges his achievement so far and will, I hope, gain him more attention as an important contemporary writer working within a rich Catholic tradition. □

SCREEN

GRAY GHOSTS

'ALL AMERICAN' & 'A CRY IN THE DARK'

Everybody's All-American, with Jessica Lange and Dennis Quaid, is an uneven but interesting mix of sports, comedy, romance, and social history. Like a groggy running back, it bumps raggedly around, but still manages to total points. The movie tackles a question most sports films neglect: what happens when the touchdowns are over? Amidst a number of clichés, originality triumphs through superb acting. Quaid plays Gavin Gray, "the gray ghost," an LSU tailback in the late fifties who knows something has to follow All-American status and a career in the pros. But he never plans for the future well enough, and so winds up a boozy, self-pitying, middle-aged man. The film's strongest moment follows the miracle finish of one of his college games, in which, heroically shouldered atop his teammates, Quaid uses his eyes alone to convey how well he knows life is downhill from there. He knows, but lacks the will to fight it.

Jessica Lange is Quaid's girl, "Magnolia Queen," young wife, domestic, childbearer, and finally savior as a shrewd eighties businesswoman. Director Taylor Hackford (*An Officer and a Gentleman*) shoves in other role reversals: the downward career of the "ghost" is contrasted to the upward mobility of a black athlete (Carl Lumbly) who, denied a shot at college in the fifties, turns cook, joins the civil rights movement, and becomes a successful restaurateur. Timothy Hutton plays Quaid's mousy college friend (and worshiper of Lange from afar), who becomes a professor and keeps on popping up in the hip guise of the moment: crew cut, mustache, hippie long hair, and a full-fledged beard, the kind that comes with tenure. Burly John Goodman plays Quaid's "other" half: his LSU teammate, main blocker, drinking companion, and "good ole boy" who naturally turns out to be untrustworthy.

The plot sometimes drifts because of these tangents and tie-ins. But Hackford makes good use of the ironic rhythm from the sexual and racial role reversals in the screenplay by Tom Rickman (*Coal Miner's Daughter*). A few of the plot twists are telegraphed ahead of time, but the actors rise above the material to make it compelling. Even Hutton, whose function is to throw a few blocks for the story (so to speak), shoulders his caricature decently.

This film belongs to Lange and Quaid. Lange perfectly encapsulates at least four phases of contemporary American womanhood. In an early LSU scene Hutton asks shyly what she majors in. Lange answers (drawing both innocence and self-aware self-betrayal), "Gavin and me. I major in Gavin and me." Her range is enormous: from belle-like sweetness, submissiveness as a player's wife, obsession with maternity as compensation, anger over Quaid's irresponsibility, growing assertiveness, and, throughout, an alluring eros. She even manages to make a love scene with Hutton sexy! With Quaid, she creates a sulky, sultry chemistry, a bittersweet symbiosis of love/hate. Because she is so radiant, what many miss in her acting is the craft. Yet the role is powerful precisely because it is understated, cleanly done, and centered. (Lange can also be seen in the current *Far North*, written by her real life companion, Sam Shepherd.)

Quaid carries his doom-laden glory well. Aside from clichés, there are problems with the football—some modern footage is interpolated inaccurately and some plays make no sense. But Quaid keeps things pumping with cocky energy (similar to his astronaut in *The Right Stuff*) and his portrait of the athlete as a prematurely old man. He is at his best in portraying Gray's later years. Quaid contorts his body to express pain and age; he hunches over, managing nearly to erase his neck. *Everybody's All-American*—like *Bull Durham* and *Eight Men Out*—celebrates and satirizes sports mania. It declares that winning is good, but shows that it's not everything.

A Cry in the Dark, starring Meryl Streep, is based on a family tragedy in Australia in which a mother was accused of the grisly murder of her infant daughter. The story involved a Seventh Day Adventist family on a 1980 outback camping trip where—the mother claimed—the baby was stolen from an open tent by a species of wild dog, the dingo. The child's body was never found. Despite the initial acceptance of her story, the mother was later prosecuted and convicted for murder, with the some of the press suggesting that the child was killed as part of a religious ritual. As a recent "60 Minutes" episode reported, on September 15, 1988 the mother, Lindy Chamberlain, was declared innocent and released.

Unfortunately, the "60 Minutes" segment was better than this film, which has power only in its first half. Director Fred Schepisi (*Roxanne, Iceman*) has two immediate resources to

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draw on: the sweetness of the family toward the baby girl and the counterpoint provided by the fierce, glowering Ayer's Rock, a massive butte that dominates the wilds where the dingos rule. From *Picnic at Hanging Rock* to *Crocodile Dundee*, the Australian film tradition highlights the spooky mystery of the landscape down-under, haunted places of both good and (more often) bad magic.

This film's maternal scenes reinforce a dominant image in recent cinema: warm, protective child care, as in *Three Men and a Cradle*, *Baby Boom*, or even *The Good Mother*.

What goes wrong? First, Streep. Her gifts are evident: a genius for accent, an ability to disappear into a character—here a loving but brusque woman whose emotional control and reticence are parlayed by gossips into cold indifference. Sam Neill also does well as her nervous husband, showing less grit under pressure.

But Streep's limits are clear too. She approaches her subject intellectually, keeping the role on a documentary level. This is fair enough, but still something must be done to make brusqueness interesting. In reinventing the real Lindy Chamberlain, Streep has omitted the necessary passion to generate empathy. Other critics are already raving about how Streep deglamorizes herself, donning a black wig and hefty-looking clothes. But this is Streep-watching, not film reviewing. The issue is not Streep's self-transformation. The issue is does *her* character sing? For *A Cry* Streep will probably get an Oscar nomination for showing up. But the issue remains.

In fairness, Streep is undercut by Schepisi. He has a hot story here, and some good points to make, but he so scatters his effects that the film's tone becomes flatter than a pancake. Initial momentum dissipates as he cuts between the family trials and the media coverage and pan-Austrialian gossip on the case. His motive is valid: the case became Australia's largest legal cause célèbre, ruining marriages, tennis games, and dinner parties, as the film's rapid-fire cameos show. But again, between conception and execution falls the shadow. Among the gossips (in a giant credit list) are "truckies, trendies," and other assorted bit roles. Their overuse is painfully distracting.

Schepisi also overdoes the outrageousness of the media—an almost impossible task. But the film well documents one of the new terrors of life in any democracy. Against government, against criminals, citizens have some protection, if only theoretical; but God help you if the press decides to feed on your private life. Schepisi depicts media viciousness, especially noting the standard antireligious prejudices. Unfortunately, the satire is overdone; as with the gossips, there are too many asides. They all make the same point, and blur the central one.

"60 Minutes" did come to the aid of the Chamberlains, underplaying, of course, the press aspect of the story. Still, its fully documentary style fits the story better than Schepisi's half-realized technique. Schepisi, like Streep, can defend his methods intellectually: yes, he did have to include the role of gossips and the press. But not this way. TOM O'BRIEN

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Critics' choices for Christmas

Jane Howard

JANE HOWARD *is at work on her fifth book,* Lost in the Interior, *a report on the Middle West.*

A good antidote to self-pity is *Spare Days* (Arbor House/William Morrow, $15.95, 170 pp.), in which Marvin Barrett calls himself "a man, certainly no better and probably not much worse than most, who narrowly escaped bad trouble, or at least learned to redefine what bad trouble might be." Barrett's bad trouble, as he recovered from a heart attack, was learning that he also had stomach cancer. At sixty-three, devoutly Episcopalian, his therapies included prayer and this gracefully understated, sometimes lyrical journal of six harrowing months.

Last Notes from Home (Random House, $18.95, 397 pp.) begins with a flight to another deathbed, that of the writer and narrator Frederick Exley's older brother, in Hawaii. "The Brigadier," as Exley nicknames his brother, a colonel in the Army intelligence, has survived World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, only to succumb to cancer. On the flight west from upstate New York with his twice-widowed mother, the writer/narrator quickly shifts into the surreal reveries, flashbacks, and leaps of fancy that fill his first two books, *A Fan's Notes,* which appeared in 1968, and its 1975 sequel, *Pages from a Cold Island.* Throughout the trilogy, here concluded, Exley is outrageously comical, Rabelaisian, deeply puzzled about his country and both sexes, and deeply decent. He ought to be declared a national treasure.

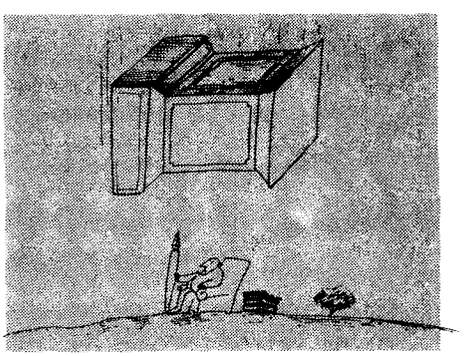
"How can you make up stuff like this?" I asked my neighbor, Thomas Harris, after I finished *The Silence of the Lambs* (St. Martin's, $18.95, 338 pp.). "The trouble is," he replied, "I don't," which is to hint at the staggering amount of research on criminal minds that underlies this and Harris's two previous novels. But his work isn't merely horrifying, it's wonderfully, subtly three-dimensional. I especially admire the care he takes with even his most incidental characters, telling us what junk is piled up on their back porches, and what they thought about when they were four.

Before and decades after I was four myself, my father Robert P. Howard was a newsman covering state politics. He personally knew ten of the thirty-seven subjects of his third book, *Mostly Good and Competent Men: Illinois Governors 1818 to 1988* (Sangamon State University and Illinois State Historical Society, $24.95, $14.95 paper, 397 pp.). This collective biography—beginning with the slaveowner Shadrach Bond and concluding with the incumbent James R. Thompson, who may or may not ever retire—is vivid, droll, and scholarly: the author is also a past president of the state historical society.

The only twinge of accord I felt with George Bush during the whole presidential campaign—speaking of Republicans—was upon reading that he, too, thinks well of *Flights of Passage: Reflections of a World War II Aviator,* by Samuel Hynes (Frederick C. Beil & Naval Institute Press, $16.95, 270 pp.). But you needn't care about flying, or have come of age fighting Japan, to relish this simple, elegant, and funny memoir by a former "midwestern puritan," as Hynes calls himself, who now is Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature at Princeton.

In *The Greenlanders* (Knopf, $19.95, 558 pp.), Jane Smiley demonstrates that she can write as compellingly of the glaciers, fogs, fjords, steads, skraelings, and passions of medieval Greenland as she did of contemporary married dentists in her short story collection *The Age of Grief.* There and in three previous novels set in modern America, Smiley fills her pages with white space and dialogue; here she crowds them with dense proof of her impassioned grasp of history. She is as versatile as any novelist around.

Another distinctly gifted young novelist is Meg Wolitzer, whose third book *This Is Your Life* (Crown, $17.95, 263 pp.) tells brilliantly how two very disparate sisters are bred in modern Manhattan by their enormous, famous television celebrity mother. "It was wintertime," Wolitzer writes, "and the flu was swirling through the coatrooms of all the private schools of New York." Two decades later, the fatter of her heroines beds down with a very fat lover, and reflects that sex, for people of their size, is "about *matter*, and the shifting and arranging of that matter . . . like sculpting in some thick wet clay and then casting it in bronze." The slimmer sister thinks wistfully of a Vermont Thanksgiving weekend where there was ". . . no subtext, . . . no hidden rage or regret." These characters, and those they get attached to, are memorably plausible.



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Andrew Sullivan

ANDREW SULLIVAN *is the associate editor of the* New Republic.

There can be few more contrasting figures in literature than Oscar Wilde and Philip Larkin, but they easily top my list for 1988. Richard Ellmann's wistful biography of Wilde (Knopf, $24.95, $11.95 paper, 576 pp.), managed both to be unconvincing and inspiring: unconvincing in its literary and philosophical claims for Wilde's pre-eminence, but utterly coherent in its moral defense of Wilde's integrity. It was one of those books that changed my mood for at least a month.

Larkin has changed my mood more permanently. I first read him in my late teens, when his sensibility of restrained hurt, emotional intensity, and vicious wit made adolescent sense. It still does. The *Collected Poems* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $19.95, 320 pp.), modestly and pellucidly edited by Anthony Thwaite, are a revelation. Some eighty-odd new poems, of which on my reckoning there are around ten of quite outstanding quality, are an unexpected gift from the old man. We still have the correspondence to come. Larkin is emerging, it seems to me, as the finest English poet since Auden. He is also quintessentially English: there are no Wildean flamboyances here, and the agonies he translates are those of the grey, pig-headed gentilities of a pre-Thatcher age. Larkin's personal life is unveiled in these new, sometimes painfully private verses as a strange microcosm of the small world around him. In more ways than one, he is the voice of what might have been.

Among novels, I enjoyed *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* by Michael Chabon (William Morrow, $16.95, 297 pp.), a much-hyped book, but worth reading nonetheless. Closer by far to my own experience growing up in the 1980s than the idiocies of McInerny or Easton Ellis, it was funny, moving, contrived enough to let you see the strained artifice of the young writer. There is a scene involving two dogs, a back yard, and two housesitters which is funnier than anything I have read this year. Its treatment of homosexuality also has a measured understanding that gay fiction usually lacks.

The other great book about youth this year is Brian McGuiness's first installment of *Wittgenstein: A Life* (California, $22.50, 321 pp.). Though as lamentably coy about homosexuality as Chabon is mature, it is as close an evocation of the struggle between the mind and the soul as I expect to discover. In the bare details of its story, the risk of God has rarely been made as clear to me.

Emilie Griffin

EMILIE GRIFFIN *writes about spirituality from the vantage point of the marketplace. Her most recent book is* Clinging: The Experience of Prayer *(Harper & Row). Her next book,* Chasing the Kingdom: A Parabolic Adventure, *which explores the quest for perfection and peace, will be published in 1989.*

In my own spiritual development there is a constant prompting—I could almost call it a drive—toward a world vision. Somehow this appetite has to be fed not just with spirituality but also with commentaries on "the world"—in the broadest sense. Hence my short list of recent and recommended books.

First, there is Conor Cruise O'Brien's *God-Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Harvard, $15.95, 97 pp.). This wide-ranging treatment of religion as a territorial impulse has a cautionary message: both Americans and Soviets should take care not to see themselves as holy nations with missionary tasks. But O'Brien scampers through history showing how much the religious imagination needs a political component, or vice versa. O'Brien is brash, opinionated, invigorating. His feisty tone provokes the reader to design her own agenda.

I've found two books by scientists, Stephen Hawking and Freeman Dyson, worthwhile in shaping my world vision from another angle. Hawking, at Cambridge, says he is trying to "read the mind of God" by concentrating on the first fraction of time. His book, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to the Black Holes* (Bantam, $18.95, 198 pp.), is about recent attempts to decipher the nature of the universe. Yet he is writing not in difficult formulas for scientific colleagues but instead in plain, well-turned English for the general reader. I found myself wondering why. One interesting reflection was his statement that everyone needs a world-picture as a basic thinking tool (even if it's wrong!). As one follows Hawking on his problem-solving chase, it seems clear he wants to know what kind of God he is dealing with; so one has a sense of Hawking's life-drama and everyone's need for spirituality.

Freeman Dyson's *Infinite in All Directions* (Harper & Row, $19.95, 323 pp.) is more deliberately reflective. "God," Dyson explains, "is what mind becomes when it has passed beyond the scale of our comprehension." A self-confessed theological amateur, Dyson believes in a God whose knowledge grows with time. He also perceives the universe in terms of consciousness. Humanity is at the second consciousness level while God is at the third. Dyson's speculations are refreshing. He breaks complexities open to show us the wonder in experience.

The spiritual consciousness in ourselves is well treated in two new books: Janice Brewi and Anne Brennan, *Celebrate Mid-Life: Jungian Archetypes and Mid-Life Spirituality* (Crossroad, $18.95, 296 pp.) and Jean Dalby Clift and Wallace B. Clift, *The Hero-Journey in Dreams* (Crossroad, $15.95, 228 pp.). Both books explain the myth-making process as we actually live it in prayer, dreams, imagination. Clear demarcations and links are drawn. I was especially taken with the child as archetype of contemplation in the Brewi-Brennan book. What a sense of recognition! And the Clifts' book is rich not only with theory but real-life material.

Finally in my world-chasing I must include Gerald Clarke's *Capote: A Biography* (Simon and Schuster, $22.95, 631 pp.). In Capote's failed life I

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glimpse the inner child, the contemplative. Capote's relentless search for love, his nostalgia for a lost time of happiness, his hunger for peace and resolution, all are glimpses of God in the world for me. Clues to a world in need of vision.

Michael Dorris

MICHAEL DORRIS *is the author of a novel,* A Yellow Raft in Blue Water *(Warner). His nonfiction book,* The Broken Cord, *will be published by Harper & Row next summer.*

As the smoke clears from a year of reading, the books I remember best are those that brought the world into sharper focus, the books whose margins I filled with exclamation marks and stars, the books I gave as gifts. Two are short story collections, appearing for the first time in paper in 1988. In *The Ideal Bakery* (Perennial, $6.95, 138 pp.), the poet and essayist Donald Hall brings to life twelve sets of absolutely indelible characters and situations. Each piece is short, straightforward, so crisply told that we temporarily forget how hard it is to grab a reader's attention and not release it until the tale is told. Months after reading the stories, my wife, Louise Erdrich, and I still discuss its events as if we had just heard they had happened, yesterday.

The fiction in Richard Bausch's *Spirits and Other Stories* (Penguin, $6.95, 237 pp.) is longer, seemingly more complex. Each story is informed by a steady, nonjudgmental moral vision, a tension between the reality and social myth of contemporary lives, and each is formed with vivid, elegant prose that wastes no word. Mr. Bausch is a master of the art of the short story, and a keen observer of the small sadnesses and failures of everyday existence.

Gathering Home (Simon and Schuster, $17.95, 240 pp.) is Vicki Covington's first novel, but you'd never guess it. The book's plot involves a series of questions and revelations that take place over the course of a Birmingham, Alabama congressional campaign—and in the course of its pages, Ms. Covington introduces characters of such unpredictable originality, such unself-conscious compassion and generosity of spirit, that before *Gathering Home* is done you feel with them the kind of ease and trust that is usually reserved for family members.

Finally, two books of nonfiction powerfully bring home the tragedy and scope of the health crisis of our time. In *Borrowed Time, an AIDS Memoire* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $18.95, 342 pp.), the poet and playwright Paul Monette chronicles the illness and death of his longtime companion, Roger Horwitz. The unsentimental narrative mixes the swirl of emotions—anger, despair, determination, hope, resolve, courage, love—that inevitably accompany loss, and it profoundly involves us from first page to last. For readers of Mr. Monette's book, AIDS will never again be an abstract or distant disease. And *The Quilt: Stories from the Names Project* (Pocket, $22.95, 160 pp.), written by Cindy Ruskin, photographs by Matt Herron, dramatically proves the adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. Each square, no matter how simple, is riveting, as survivors and loved ones attempt to encapsulate the essence of a man, woman, or child, dead of AIDS, into a small patch of cloth and words. The quilt is a brave, glowing, defiant testament, a call to arms, an indictment, and a flag of hope. This beautifully illustrated and conceived book does justice to that vision.

Dan Wakefield

DAN WAKEFIELD's *most recent book is* Returning: A Spiritual Journal *(Doubleday).*

Having recently written a highly personal nonfiction book and just contracted to write another one, I found myself going around telling people that books of this nature (not just mine, of course) seemed suddenly to have become a better form than fiction (novel and short story) for conveying deep truths about the human condition, especially in the realm of spirituality. Then I looked back on the books published this year that most moved me, that gave me the greatest insight into the spiritual condition, and found that most of them were fiction—novels and short stories. (I have pledged to heed the Writer's commandment: "Thou shalt not generalize, neither shalt thou seek to justify thine own works.")

Revelation (Simon and Schuster, $18.95, 314 pp.) is a first novel by a North Carolina writer named Peggy Payne, and it shows the assurance and mastery of a fully accomplished author. The story is that of a highly sophisticated, intellectual minister who is doing just fine as pastor to a like-minded congregation in an upscale academic suburb, when one Sunday afternoon while comfortably attending to his back yard barbecue, he hears the voice of God. His comfortable world is blown apart, and the rest of the novel is concerned with what happens to him and his wife and his church after this revelation. You will not be surprised to know that when he informs the congregation of this revelation in a sermon, the vestry votes 5-3 to recommend that he seek psychiatric counseling.

In *Good Hearts* (Atheneum, $18.95, 275 pp.), the new novel by Reynolds Price—who is, incidentally, the most famous of North Carolina's current crop of authors (is there some kind of secret literary stimulant in the soil of that state?)—God speaks to several contemporary Americans, in a story that is convincingly realistic as well as profoundly illuminating of the soul. Price takes the teenagers of his memorable first novel (Wesley Beavers and Rosacoke Mustian of *A Long and Happy Life)* into midlife crisis and as always makes matters of faith and prayer seem part of the natural order of everyday life.

Though not in a voice from on high or within, God is revealed in Alfred Alcorn's absorbing novel *Vestments* (Houghton Mifflin, $17.95, 304 pp.) when Sebastian, the story's protagonist, is washing a pile of dirty dishes and finds "the bright core of his conviction: what he believed in quite simply was the re-

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demptive power of God's love as personified by Christ." The moment of revelation is only reached after an arduous, genuine spiritual quest that begins when the cynical, hard-drinking hero pretends to be a priest in order to win the love—and hopefully the financial inheritance—of a dying aunt.

God and the Devil have always contended as real live "characters" and forces in the work of Isaac Bashevis Singer, and they of course appear again in his dependably marvelous new book of stories, *The Death of Methusaleh* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, $17.95, 244 pp.). In "The Recluse," a man justifies his desire to commit adultery when "...the Evil One kept comforting me: 'Was King David given permission to marry Bathsheba? He simply sent the husband, Uriah the Hittite, off to war. *Nu* [God only knows], and are all the so-called saints really so good?' The Evil One has an answer ready for everything." Singer has a story ready for everything, and continues to enlighten us while he skillfully entertains us.

A whole array of insight and revelation about fiction, nonfiction, and God, is stored in the rich book *Spiritual Quests: The Art and Craft of Religious Writing* (Houghton Mifflin, $16.96, 192 pp.)—essays drawn from provocative talks on the subject at the New York Public Library by Mary Gordon, David Bradley, Jaroslav Pelikan, Frederick Buechner, Hugh Nissenson, and Alan Ginsberg, edited by William Zinsser. One of the many gems I have taken like treasure from this volume is novelist Buechner's definition of faith as "...homesickness...a lump in the throat. Faith is less a position *on* than a movement *toward*—less a sure thing than a hunch. Faith is waiting. Faith is journeying through space and time."

I cannot list the books of the year that were most important to me without mentioning a new translation of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John by Andy Gaus, *The Unvarnished Gospels* (Threshold Books, Dusty Ridge Rd., RD3, Putney, VT 05346, $12, 272 pp.). This translation that "lets the original Greek speak for itself" has a freshness and power that brings the text to life in a vibrant way, is colloquial without being slangy, and maintains a wonderful rhythm that is missing in some of the recent versions. Here is the beginning of the book of John, which helps me hear it and think about its meaning anew:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward God, and God was what the word was. It was with God in the beginning. All things happened through it, and not one thing that has happened, happened without it. Within it there was Life, and the Life was the light of the world. And in the darkness, the light is shining, and the darkness never got hold of it."

Diane Apostolos-Cappadona

DIANE APOSTOLOS-CAPPADONA *is professorial lecturer on religion and the arts at Georgetown University. She has edited several books dealing with art and spirituality including* Symbolism, the Sacred and the Arts *by Mircea Eliade (Crossroad), and (with Douglas Adams) a collection of essays,* Art as Religious Studies *(Crossroad).*

The task of selecting my favorite art books for 1988 is similar to that of identifying my favorite painting or museum. How exactly does one choose? Are the books which come to mind first the most appropriate ones or merely the ones I read most recently? Or is it the lasting memory of the images that occasion the appropriate selections? In my study of the relationship between religion and art, I have come to the conclusion that the evidence argues most often for a "middle path." So it is that axiom that I follow in this brief list of suggested art books for 1988.

My strongest visual memories from a new book are Michael Hirst's catalogue, *Michelangelo Draftsman* (Olivetti, $16.95, 170 pp., 63 illustrations). This exquisite catalogue is replete with such splendid reproductions of Michelangelo's drawings, including several for the Sistine Chapel ceiling, that the reader feels an intimate and direct connection to the artist. Of all the recent art books I can think of, this is the one which falls first and foremost into the categories of "a delight to see" and "a pleasure to own." *Michelangelo Draftsman* is most highly recommended for those persons who understand the mystery and the magic of an artist's drawings.

In a similar vein is another exhibition catalogue, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* by Roger S. Wieck (George Braziller, $45, 230 pp., 240 illustrations). Featuring treasured medieval manuscript illuminations as its focus, the essays in this volume are accessible to the nonspecialist and focus on the importance of the tradition of book illustrations and the splendor of the medieval period.

Sandra S. Phillips's *Charmed Places: Hudson River Artists and Their Houses, Studios, and Vistas* (Abrams, $29.95, 160 pp., 184 illustrations) is another art book that benefits from an accompanying museum exhibition. In this case, the interest is in the relationship between the domestic environments of several of nineteenth-century America's leading painters, including Thomas Cole, Samuel F. B. Morse, and Frederic Edwin Church. The color plates of Church's estate, Olana, are not just first-rate reproductions but also present a visual argument for the development of his art. Again, the accompanying essays written by scholars in American art are accessible and informative to the general reader.

On the more scholarly level, my selections are Moshe Barasch's *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, $44.50, 196 pp., 80 illustrations), and Richard Wollheim's *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, $45, 384 pp., 358 illustrations). Barasch's text is the first to examine the work of the great Italian master, Giotto, in terms of the significance and symbolism of gestures. In his skillful analysis of the "Pact of Judas" and the "Noli Me Tangere" sequences from the Scrovegni Chapel, Barasch proves the visual connectors between Giotto's gestures and the contemporary law courts and church rituals. Suddenly the theological and cultural implications of Giot-

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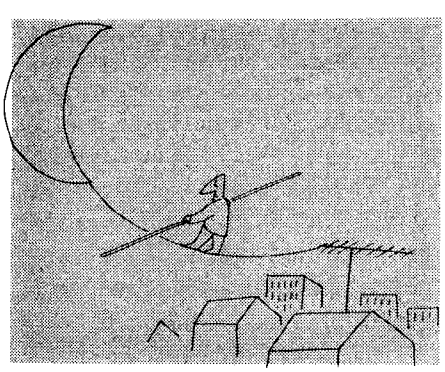
to's work are more appropriate than ever.

In the sumptuously illustrated publication of his 1984 Mellon Lectures, Wollheim argues that we can only come to grasp the true nature of a painting when we recognize the fundamental fact that art is the process of the creative experience. In his new style of interpreting art from the vantage point of the artist and not the spectator, Wollheim challenges our traditional understanding of art and the method of seeing the works of art. His discussions of Titian, Poussin, Ingres, Manet, Picasso, and de Kooning are more than memorable. This is a gift for the eye and a challenge to the mind.

One classic book that continues to make an excellent gift is Jane Dillenberger's *Style and Content in Christian Art* (Crossroad, $17.95, 240 pp., 82 illustrations). Designed for the average reader, the history of Christian art is discussed by this art historian with regard to the scriptural, historical, theological, and artistic interpretations of each generation.

As 1988 draws to a close, I anticipate two new books which should appear in time for the Christmas season—Roger Lipsey's *An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art* (Shambhala, $40, 520 pp., 120 illustrations), and Ruth Mellinkoff's *The Devil at Isenheim* (California $29.95, 100 pp., 43 illustrations). Although designed for the average reader, my preview copy of Lipsey's text suggests it is more appropriate for those specifically interested in religion and art. Mellinkoff's text will be an appropriate gift for any reader. Handsomely illustrated and with an informative text, *The Devil at Isenheim* should provide a visual feast for the holiday season of 1988!



Steven Englund

STEVEN ENGLUND *is an American writer living in Paris and working on a biography of Napoleon.*

For the Sunday philosopher, such as myself, I strongly recommend Bruce Duffy's *The World as I Found It* (Ticknor & Fields, $10.95, 547 pp., paper). Ostensibly a group biography of Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the center of the piece is unquestionably Wittgenstein, whom Duffy renders with poignancy and nuance, and—it being a first novel—with a wonderful abandon in filling in inner space. There are passages of sublime writing—e.g., a faultless description of Wittgenstein *père's* idolatrous passion for music—but they do not distract one from the philosophical depth of the book. There is more substance here than in most *romans d'idées*, enough to make even the "math shy" (like me) rush out and buy a copy of *Philosophical Investigations*.

In another world entirely stands Paul Monette's *Love Alone, Eighteen Elegies for Rog* (St. Martin's, $13.95, 65 pp.), which I recommend only to the stoutest of heart. Readers will recognize Monette's name in connection with his searing chronicle of his lover's death from AIDS *(Borrowed Time)*. These elegies have appeared since that book. Of an all but unbearable tenderness and beauty, these elegies are yet *deeply* disturbing, both in the poet's untranscended anger and in his murderous rage at faith and church. In the coda to the eighteenth elegy, Monette, himself infected with the AIDS virus, apostrophizes the Christian reader thus:

> if you should pass beneath our cypresses you who are praying man your god can go to hell but since you are so inclined pray that my friend and I be still together....

So one prays, oh how one prays, for this man and his dead lover; but I am hoping there'll arise a reader stronger in faith, and more gifted in letters, than I, who can pen a helpful reply to Monette while there's still time.

Turning to history, let me begin with Michael Mann's *The Sources of Social Power*, Vol. 1: *A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge, $16, 549 pp., paper) a tour de force that makes good on its bid "to provide a history and theory of power relations in human societies." Dissolving power into its economic, political, military, and ideological components, Mann examines every important society in recorded history, though concentrating with increasing exclusivity on the West. There are judgments that I quibble with—for example, the conflation of religion with ideology—but it is a testimony to Mann's evenhandedness that this reader could not, for the life of him, figure out the author's *parti pris*. (I had to dig to find out he's a Fabian socialist.) The normally astringent Perry Anderson writes of this first installment of a three-volume *opus magnum* "not lesser than [Max Weber's] *Economy and Society* in analytic structure, it is superior as literature." He's right.

Finally, two books offer interesting new takes on very old subjects: the French Revolution, and nationalism. George Comninel's *Rethinking the French Revolution* (Verso, $13.95, 225 pp., paper) cleans out the Marxist Augean stable of its concept of "bourgeois revolution"—an idea that Marx propounded only fitfully and implicitly, but which his epigoni have stalwartly, if unconvincingly, maintained. Till now. Brilliantly showing that this baggage is useless, Comninel jettisons it and then proceeds to suggest a new Marxist interpretation of the Revolution based on a rigorous application of the principles of historical materialism found in *Kapital*. Volume two promises to hammer the case home in detail, but for now the reader understands that the Revolution in France, whatever else it did to foster a modern political structure (and culture), did not create a capitalist society.

Roman Szporluk nicely reinvigorates the familiar topic of Marx on nationalism by analyzing a neglected manuscript of Karl Marx—his unfinished 1845 critique of a work by the well-known German

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economist, Friedrich List. (The "List Critique" remained comparatively unknown till 1971!). Szporluk's book, *Communism and Nationalism* (Oxford, $32.95, 307 pp.), then goes on to offer a first-rate analysis of List's "national" economics and a less convincing critique of Marxism's alleged inadequacies in accounting for nations and national sentiment.

Chet Raymo

CHET RAYMO, *professor of physics at Stonehill College in Massachusetts, is a science columnist for the* Boston Globe *and the author of several books on science, most recently,* Honey from Stone *(Dodd Mead).*

Telling stories of the creation was first the business of tribal elders, then of theologians and philosophers. Now the activity has been taken up by natural scientists. A spate of recent books by astrophysicists, quantum mechanicists, molecular biologists, and neurobiologists address the age-old question: Where did we come from? Why are we here? In their answer to the first question the books are consistent, and tell the story of a new evolutionary synthesis embracing galaxies and quarks, DNA and neural networks, from the big bang to the computers. In their answer to the second question the books are widely diverse, and suggest a new boldness on the part of scientists to speculate about the meaning of their remarkable discoveries.

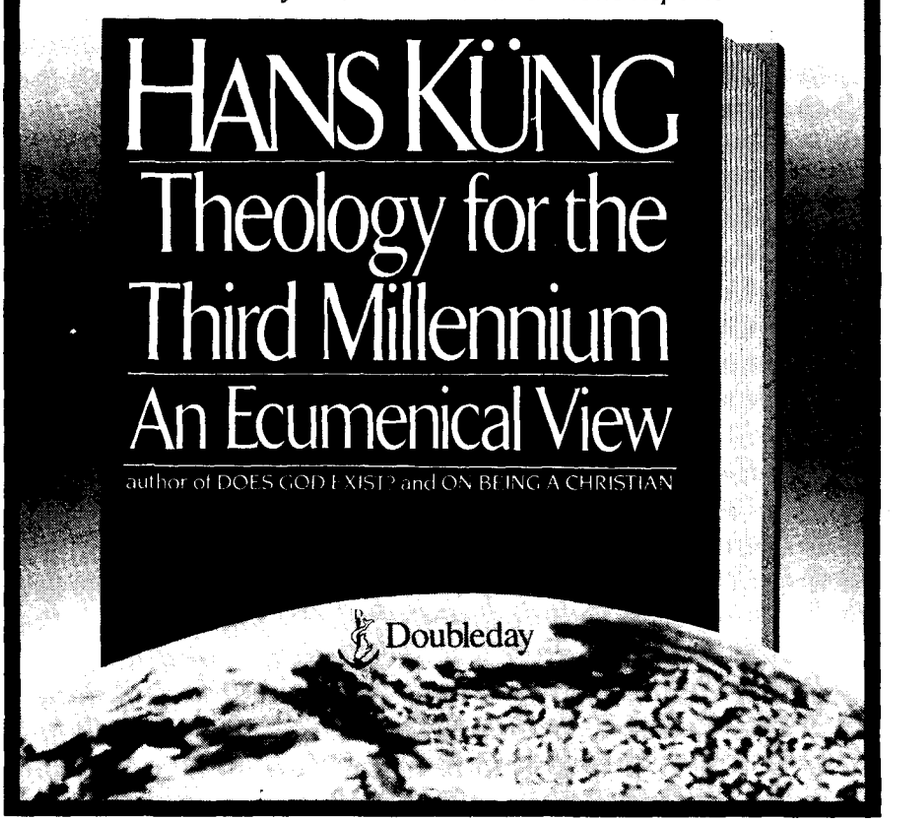
Richard Dawkins's *The Blind Watchmaker* (Norton, $18.95, 332 pp.) is subtitled "Why the evidence of evolution reveals a universe without design." Dawkins is an Oxford zoologist and author of the popular and influential *The Selfish Gene*. In his new work he brilliantly demonstrates how seemingly improbable complexity can arise from the action of simple algorithms acting over immense intervals of time. The centerpiece of the book is a computer program written by Dawkins to simulate evolution by natural selection. The program gener-

Hans Küng lays the foundations for tomorrow's religion

In what has been called the most important book of his career, Hans Küng challenges us to develop a new way of thinking about religion. The outspoken theologian takes a critical look at today's religious institutions and identifies the factors that make them vital parts of today's society—as they are in Poland and Iran. He also points out those factors that create the rigid and remote hierarchies that were developed in these and other areas and shows why they have outlived their purpose and must be rebuilt. Brilliantly illuminating and controversial, *Theology for the Third Millennium* is essential reading for everyone who wants to understand the changes now sweeping the world's religions.

"A highly articulate theologian of the contemporary Church." —*Spiritual Life*

"This is vintage Küng." —Harvey Cox, *The National Catholic Reporter*


HANS KÜNG
Theology for the Third Millennium
An Ecumenical View
author of DOES GOD EXIST? and ON BEING A CHRISTIAN
Doubleday

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ates "organisms" whose variety and complexity surprised even Dawkins.

Paul Davies is a theoretical physicist whose *God and the New Physics* was a bestseller several years ago. His newest book, *The Cosmic Blueprint* (Simon and Schuster, $17.95, 224 pp.), rejects the argument that the universe is at the mercy of random forces. Davies sees evidence for a creative force built into the very fabric of creation that moves toward consciousness and order. He rejects the term *predestined* in favor of *predisposed*, and ranges across physics, biology, and computer science to show that matter and energy have innate self-organizing tendencies that efficiently bring new structures into being.

In my opinion, both Dawkins and Davies draw more profound conclusions than the weight of their evidence will logically bear, and the fact that they draw rather different conclusions confirms this. Astrophysicist George Greenstein covers much the same ground in *The Symbiotic Universe: Life and Mind in the Cosmos* (Morrow, $18.95, 271 pp.), but he is more modest in his assertions about what it all means. Greenstein rehearses the many improbable things that had to happen for life to appear in the universe; this universe could not exist without life, he concludes, nor could we exist in any other universe. Greenstein insists that science expands, rather than shrinks, the list of unsolved mysteries, and in the face of the ultimate mystery he maintains a confident and respectful awe.

My favorite of the new creation writers is neurobiologist William Calvin. His survey of the evolutionary synthesis is spun as a kind of campfire tale told during a two-week-long raft trip on the Colorado River. *The River that Flows Uphill: A Journey from the Big Bang to the Big Brain* (Sierra Club, $12.95, 528 pp.) is an astonishing piece of work, at once scholarly and intensely personal, full of dazzling science and intriguing speculation, as thrilling to read as to shoot the river rapids in a rubber raft. If one is going to speculate about creation, then it is best to be immersed in it, and I cannot imagine any place more evocative of deep time and natural mystery than the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. What finally emerges from Calvin's account of contemporary science is a vision of creation as inexorable, as beckoning, as dangerous and beautiful as the river itself.

Molly Finn

MOLLY FINN *is a voracious reader, a musician who sings with* Amici Musicale, *and the author of three cookbooks.*

Gabriel Garcia Márquez presents his imaginative world to us with a wealth of concrete detail, with myriad sights, sounds, and especially smells, with descriptions consisting of long lists of rather mundane nouns attached to astonishing, moving, utterly revealing adjectives. How then do we finish *Love in the Time of Cholera* (Knopf, $18.95, 348 pp.), feeling that what we have read is an extended meditation on a series of abstractions: time and the persistence of character through time, love, faithfulness, nostalgia, old age, and death?

This meditation is contained in, is illustrated by, a story, and Garcia Márquez tells this story with the same mastery we first met in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The author imbues each of his character's acts with meaning and magically tells us what the meaning is without a ponderous word or gesture. You'll be sorry when it ends, but glad to be able to turn right back to the beginning and immediately read it again. This is a book to read over and over.

James Woodress's *Willa Cather, A Literary Life* (University of Nebraska, $35, 583 pp.) is just that, a biography of a major American writer that focuses mainly on her wonderful novels and stories. Woodress sensibly assigns a very minor place to the speculations about Cather's sexual orientation that have preoccupied at least two recent biographers, but doesn't stint when providing material that reveals her character and personality. Quoting extensively from her early newspaper columns, critical essays, and letters, Woodress gives a vivid sense of Cather's precocity. She began her career as a published critic while a student at the University of Nebraska. A local newspaper owner referred to her as "*that meatax girl*" as she slashed out at the world of letters and the theater with her pen from her corner in Nebraska. She never was lukewarm.

This book does what a literary biography should do: it sends you back to the works themselves with a little more knowledge about sources, some discussion of technical problems, and a survey of the critical literature, leaving the essential mystery untouched. In addition, it puts us in touch with a strong, sensible person, with a unique imagination, and a splendidly independent spirit.

The same sort of independence is evident from the earliest of the *Selected Letters of Virgil Thomson* (Summit, $24.95, 413 pp.) and it sustains him through the sixty-eight years' worth of correspondence collected here. In expressive and lucid prose, Thomson reflects on his expatriate life in Paris (1925-40), on his work as a composer, and, in long and largely unpunctuated letters to Gertrude Stein, on their numerous collaborations. Thomson is gloriously self-assured; he is frank and opinionated when writing to or about fellow composers, unbending but perfectly reasonable in his business dealings. He is at his best and most humorous answering readers who responded to his music criticism in the New York *Herald Tribune* from 1940-1954. He answered all letters, and he certainly didn't waste words: "I thank you for your extremely indignant letter. I am afraid I do consider Schumann to be a greater and more original composer than Brahms. Sincerely yours."

Elizabeth David is without doubt the best writer about food in the English language. Her *Italian Food* (Harper & Row, $27.50, 241 pp.) has just been reissued in an elaborate, extensively illustrated and (fortunately, only slightly) revised edition. My copy, acquired in 1954 when it was first published, is battered and stained with olive oil. In a roundup review, Evelyn Waugh named it one of the two best books of the year. It is still one of the best books of the year, whether you

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indulge in the lavish coffee table version with its hundreds of beautiful reproductions of Italian drawings and paintings ranging from Roman times to the twentieth century or go for the shoestring Penguin edition, still in print. This is a book to savor and to use. *Buón appetito!*

Keith Burris

KEITH BURRIS *writes editorials and columns for the* Blade, *the Toledo, Ohio newspaper where he is an associate editor.*

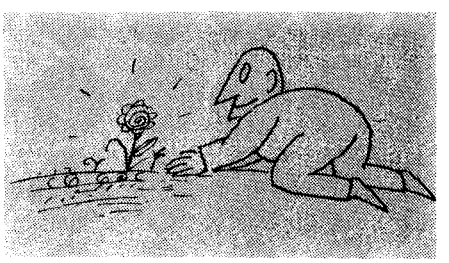
I am an ecumenical reader—probably in the worst sense of the word. For one thing I like to be surprised by the grace of a writer's thought and style and that is a tall order for most political writing. I am probably too impressed by a book that accomplishes this, when one does, though I am unapologetically non-ideological; I don't see how one can enjoy reading if one is *that* kind of critic. Also, I have bad reading habits; I tend to read several books at once and not necessarily finish every last one. And I tend to pile up classical books that I feel I should read or re-read and then let them gather dust while I steal off to read something that seems less of a duty. Hence Sir Karl Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies* gathers dust while I read Ira Berkow's biography of Red Smith. With those warnings (and the recommendation that no sensible person should read a campaign biography or the dissections of Gail Sheehy), here is my list of recommended 1988 political books.

Books by Politicians: This is a sorry lot generally but I can recommend two, one by an establishment pol and the other by a venerable proponent of the unconventional. Daniel P. Moynihan's *Came the Revolution: Argument in the Reagan Era* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $17.95, 344 pp.) has some pap in it but it is generally a wise and enlightened guide to the practical problems of American government, written from the standpoint of one who has become a congressional animal yet remains a social critic. Eugene J. McCarthy's *Required Reading: A Decade of Political Wit and Wisdom* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $16.95, 256 pp.) actually lives up to its subtitle. This book includes thoughtful essays on the meaning of the federal debt and the imbalance of trade, as well as tongue in cheek observations on the subculture of Washington D.C.

Books on -isms: Conservatism is still the reigning fad and the two best books I have read on the subject are by conservatives, but men not firmly attached to the right. The first is Roger Scruton, Britain's most gifted and astute conservative polemicist. His book is called *Untimely Tracts* (St. Martin's, $19.95, 272 pp.) and is a collection of columns from the *Times* of London. Scruton is a traditional conservative and a reactionary, but he has a heart and too fine a mind to embrace Reaganism or Thatcherism whole-hog. Like George F. Will, he is an academician by training and has written not only in political theory but aesthetics. He is really better than Will, because he is no apologist for the powerful or the smug, and because he is funny. Plus, he writes like an angel; in place of Will's Georgetown fatuousness one finds a delicate and controlled sense of rage.

The second conservative is Robert Nisbet whose book is called *The Present Age* (Harper & Row, $17.95, 145 pp.). Nisbet is an American sociologist who uses the conservative tradition to draw a stinging critique not only of the federal bureaucracy and its managerial classes but American militarism and the Wilsonian impulse to set the world straight.

Memories: By all means read Christopher Hope's finely tuned memoir of growing up in South Africa, *White Boy Running* (Farrar Straus Giroux, $17.95, 273 pp.). Hope, a novelist now living in London, is the white boy and his remembrances are complex and moving.



One sees that sad land, for once, from within and one also sees how right Martin Luther King, Jr., was to insist that both the victim and the perpetrator are trapped in the internal symmetry of racism, and that both are worth saving.

Charles Peters's book *Tilting at Windmills* (Addison-Wesley, $18.95, 294 pp.) is just as good in a different way. Part memoir and part political tract, we follow the author from idyllic boyhood in West Virginia, to New York bohemia, to minor political career, to government service, and finally to starting a magazine that has made a difference. Peters combines Russell Baker's style of nostalgia with political good sense. He is that rare voice from Washington that really does represent learning from experience and reflection. Peters believes in government as a positive force, in part because he believes rational people can learn from their mistakes. And it is hard not to like Peters because he has tried to learn from his own errors—he's not afraid to admit he's been wrong and to examine those instances with as much curiosity as the occasions in which he believes others have been mistaken.

This leads to surprising insights like the (I believe correct) assertion that the Kennedys introduced snobbery to the Democratic party. The party has never gotten out from under its sense of being superior to and removed from middle America.

On the down side, Peters is one who feels compelled to be a hedgehog when he is probably more of a fox. He wants to make neoliberalism a sort of ideology and he can't think of much good to say about any Republican. There are worse sins.

Essays: For fun try Hunter S. Thompson's *A Generation of Swine* (Summit, $17.95, 304 pp.). He is actually a fairly conventional Democratic liberal and about as wild a thinker as he is a quiet bourgeois in his private life, but he's refreshing. He thinks politics is fun, not a punishment.

Paul Fussell's *Thank God for the Atom Bomb and Other Essays* (Summit, $17.95, 295 pp.) represents the work of the best full-length essayist writing in America today. He offers up a peach of a

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reflection, for example, on George Orwell. One would not have thought the world needed another, but Fussell understands Orwell intuitively. Perhaps that is because he is a writer of similar temperament—a man of great intellectual integrity who despises cant and humorlessness. He is our own Orwell. And God will pardon Paul Fussell, sooner than most, for writing well.

Janice Harayda

JANICE HARAYDA *is the book editor and literary critic of the* Cleveland Plain Dealer. *Her articles have appeared in the* Wall Street Journal, *the* New York Times, *among others.*

For a quarter-century, Raymond Carver wrote masterful stories about characters whose luck, as one of them put it, "had gone south on them." And when he died, on August 2, he left an extraordinarily rich legacy for someone who had not completed his fiftieth year: ten books of poetry, essays, and stories, and the manuscript of *A New Path to the Waterfall*, a book of poems that Atlantic Monthly will publish next year.

Carver's last book allowed his star to blaze most brilliantly just before it went dark. Nearly all of the thirty-seven stories in *Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories* (Atlantic Monthly, $19.95, 391 pp.) involve the people he called the "working poor," and whose lives he infuses with dignity and grace. There is no voyeurism or exploitation in these tales of men and women living emotionally and financially on the margin. Nor is there any there-but-for-the-grace-of-God-go-I condescension.

Carver regarded his characters with a clear-eyed compassion and empathy rooted solidly in his own experience, which had included victories over bankruptcy and alcoholism and marital strife. And those qualities make *Where I'm Calling From* a tour de force that includes the particularly poignant "Errand," a story about the death of Anton Chekhov that became Carver's last published work.

Set mostly in the Pacific Northwest, Carver's stories helped to generate a boom in fiction with a sharp regional accent, a category enriched this year by three remarkable new voices. Eric Larsen has just won the Heartland Prize for fiction for *An American Memory* (Algonquin, $12.95, 227 pp.), a first novel that evokes with quiet eloquence the crippling effects of geographic and emotional isolation and three generations of a West Tree, Minnesota, farm family.

Gary Krist made a similarly impressive start with *The Garden State* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $16.95, 178 pp.), a collection of eight short stories that portrays New Jersey with a wit, affection, and sense of wonder that are apparent from the first sentence of its opening story. ("One of the first things I ever heard about my mother's husband was that he once tried to tip his dentist.")

And Susan Lowell offers a fresh and elegantly stylized look at the American Southwest in *Ganado Red* (Milkweed Editions, $9.95, 149 pp.), eight short stories and a title novella that together won the Milkweed National Fiction Prize. The latter traces the history of a rug, completed in 1920 by a Navajo known as La Tejedora ("The Weaver"), through the succession of owners whom the rug seduces over six decades. And as their stories unfold, the rug becomes the de facto protagonist of the novella and a powerful metaphor for many kinds of love, including maternal, erotic, and spiritual.

None of this is to suggest, of course, that it's been a fallow year for nonfiction. Anita Pollitzer has written a welcome memoir of her art-school friend, Georgia O'Keeffe, that has been collected along with dozens of letters exchanged between the two in *A Woman on Paper: Georgia O'Keeffe* (Touchstone, $12.95, 290 pp.). Larry C. White has compiled a potent and persuasive indictment of the tobacco lobby in *Merchants of Death: The American Tobacco Industry* (Morrow, $17.95, 239 pp.). And a magisterial book on the ballet captured new attention in January when it won the National Book Critics Circle prize for criticism. *Dance Writings* (Knopf, $40, 608 pp.) collects the reviews of Edwin Denby, who wrote many of his best pieces for the late New York *Herald Tribune*. Denby is often called the "father of dance criticism," a comment that is akin to describing Antonio Stradivari as the "father of fiddle-making." So perhaps it's best to avoid summaries of his astonishing achievements and to say just this: *Dance Writings* is possibly the best book that you, or anyone on your holiday gift list, will ever read on the ballet. No aspect of the art form escapes his attention: sets, costumes, choreography, or performers. And Denby's insights are so unrelentingly original and compelling that anyone who reads this book will never be able to view "The Nutcracker" in quite the same way again.

Correction

The following title was omitted from the "Human Family" booklist (Nov. 18):

Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965, *by Juan Williams. Penguin Books, 1988, $10.,95.*

Highlighted are the dramatic and poignant events that occurred in the South between 1954 and 1965, including stories of the Montgomery bus boycott, the freedom rides, the great Selma-to-Montgomery march, and accounts of the individuals who found themselves at the center of the storm. (12 and up)

Editors' Choices

On becoming editor of *Commonweal* last January, I was warned by my departing predecessor that there would be no time for novel reading, one of my favorite pastimes and usually an enormous relief from the tugs and pulls of the so-called real world. He wasn't wrong. My novel reading was confined to summer vacation, when I devoured Iris Murdoch,

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The Book and the Brotherhood (Viking, $19.95), Gabriel Garcia Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (Knopf, $18.95, 348 pp.), Isabel Allende, *Eva Luna* (Knopf, $18.95, 304 pp.)—and it was only a two-week vacation!

Necessarily—and mostly—I have been keeping up with that all-too-real world: Allen Blinder, *Hard Heads, Soft Hearts: Tough-Minded Economics for a Just Society* (Addison-Wesley, $17.95, 235 pp.), and Benjamin Friedman, *Day of Reckoning* (Random House, $19.95, 323 pp.) are two good examples of the growing number of economists and policymakers making a successful effort to help the nonspecialist grapple with the major issues facing our country. On the real-world front, foreign division: Thomas Gannon, S.J., has edited a serious and substantial work on *World Catholicism in Transition* (Macmillan, $35, 402 pp.) which I am part way through. The twenty-two essays promise a comprehensive assessment of what the church is doing and where it may be going. Finally, some catch-up reading on constantly and consistently troubled areas of the world led me to Neal Ascherson, *The Struggles for Poland* (Random House, $19.95, 242 pp.), and David Shipler's 1986 book *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land* (Times Books, $22.50).

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged* (University of Chicago, $19.95, 254 pp.) is a landmark in the critical analysis of poverty and racism in the U.S. It is also an invitation to do something about it.

Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (Random House, $24.95, 861 pp.). Another bespotted tale from the war that will not die. One man's complex character becomes more than a metaphor for this American tragedy.

Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny by Jean-Marie Simon (W.W. Norton, $19.95, 256 pp.). Photographs and text that sear the soul with their beauty and bestiality. A war in progress we dare not forget.

Time's Covenant (University of Pittsburgh, $19.95, 213 pp.), the essays and sermons of the late William Clancy. Clancy's strong intelligence is enhanced by the generousness of his catholic faith and the essential courtliness of his being. Love will outlast the ruins.

PATRICK JORDAN

I sometimes say that editorial writing drives me to fiction. This year, thank God and Reynolds Price, it drove me to Mt. Moriah, North Carolina and the world of Wesley Beavers and Rosacoke Mustian in *A Long and Happy Life*, then on to Raleigh, where the Beavers, now married and middle-aged, live in *Good Hearts* (Atheneum, $18.95, 275 pp.).

These characters are familiar: their Southern way of speaking, their way of

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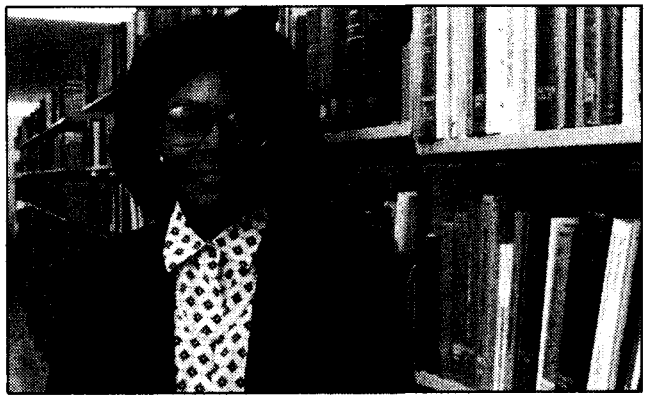

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treating trees or the approaching darkness like a friend, their particular ties to kin and community, black folks and white, their sense of watching one another with keen intelligence, and their habit of waiting on life (as from the front porch rocker) to show its own meaning. Price's people are steeped in Baptist faith, a straightforward, nonanalytical way of looking at the simple and complex, even the tragic. They assume as they breathe that the world is always on the verge of grace, made as it was for redemption. That redemption sometimes comes showering down in a flash, and other times just hovers over everybody like a storm cloud of temptation. If there is any guilt in these stories it is Baptist guilt, not clearly connected to someone else's list of rights and wrongs; it's something inside where God might also be, like a hankering for more of life, or a wondering where something went wrong.

Most of all, one should meet Rosa. She is a mature and wise woman, unself-consciously good, good enough to reconcile even what is beyond her capacity to grasp. KAREN SUE SMITH

I have a penchant for off-the-track, over-my-head books that probe the history of human consciousness. The one I keep returning to is the anonymously authored *Meditations on the Tarot* (Amity House, $19.95 paper, 658 pp.), a one of a kind spiritual classic, profound, mind-stretching, full of surprises—and it gets better with every reading. The second, a new discovery this year, is Jean Gebser's *The Ever-Present Origin* (Tr. by Noel Barstad with Algis Mickunas, Ohio University, $69.95, $29.95 paper, 614 pp.), a book that jangled all of my categories and made me look at Western history, and particularly figures like Petrarch and Picasso, in an entirely new light.

The late John A.T. Robinson's *The Priority of John* (Meyer Stone, $19.95, 443 pp.) also sheds surprising light on that Gospel—and is lucid and eminently readable.

Two very different spiritual journey books, one from a hard-driving journalist-author and the other from a physicist showing how science can give new life to the language of praise, get high marks: Dan Wakefield's *Returning* (Doubleday, $17.95, 250 pp.) and Chet Raymo's "book of hours," *Honey from Stone: A Naturalist's Search for God* (Dodd, Mead, $16.95, 188 pp.). Raymo is as good a writer as the late Loren Eiseley.

Finally, read Christopher Nolan's novel of his childhood, *Under the Eye of the Clock* (St. Martin's, $16.95, 163 pp.). His cerebral palsy hasn't shaken the steadiness of his observant mind, or his Irish way with words. DAVID TOOLAN

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 642)

viduals who enjoy the charism of presiding, imposing hands on them, and, in effect, ordaining them (often if only for that local community)? When the continuity of ecclesiastical discipline has greater value than celebrating the Eucharist where two or three are gathered together in God's name, then it is my opinion that to continue to adhere to that discipline is tantamount to fracturing community, a much more heinous act.

JIM McCREA

Orthodoxy & the faithful

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Your forum on the question of who may preside at the Eucharist ["Dear Friends," September 9] was intensely interesting, not so much for its (predictable) content as for its form. Don Timmerman's argument—that to obey church law is sinful for it entails cooperation with the systemic injustice of society—is simple and straightforward—and no different, essentially, from the argument of the many simple covenant communities that have come and gone since the Reformation. Gordon Zahn's argument is no less straightforward—that to be authentically Catholic one must subordinate private judgment to "the magisterium in Rome" (Timmerman's odd phrase).

Thus we have pro and con, both presented succinctly—and by laymen. But the last word you have reserved to John Baldovin, S.J., a professional clergyman—and what a word it is! Thrice the length of Zahn and six times that of poor Timmerman (who, after all, began the whole thing), it is written in that tortured clericalese in which distinctions and nuances become smoke screens for the writer to hide behind. (Need we ask who he is hiding from?)

What, for instance, is one to do with a sentence like this: "We often fail to remember that a religious faith that makes the outrageous claim that God saved us by dying does not lend itself to non-dialectical affirmations"? Hey, Father Baldovin, why not throw in a fourth negative while you're at it and *really* obscure things? Despite the great quantities of smoke, Baldovin comes out (predictably) on the side of the Zahns. The only reason for all the words is to assure the Timmermans (and, no doubt the writer himself) that he, too, is stressed by all this—and terribly, terribly concerned. His solution: let's talk—and talk and talk—but on no account *act*. In my view, both Timmerman and Zahn are right—and Baldovin adds nothing but fog. The clue to bridging the seemingly unbridgeable ravine between Timmerman and Zahn is that queer phrase of Timmerman's (quoted twice by the disconcerted Zahn), "the magisterium in Rome." Of course the magisterium, the teaching charism of the church, is not, and never was, localized. It exists in every bishop, in every man and woman honored by the church as "doctor," and in many other men and women who will be so honored in future. It is the authentic teaching of the Holy Spirit from the mouths of believers. Let us agree with Zahn that to break with this teaching (for however heroic and holy a reason) is to cut oneself off from the visible church Catholic. Let us even agree that to remain catholic this church must be able to exercise a universal discipline. However. . . .

If bishops were elected by their people (as they were in the post-apostolic centuries); if the local church (that is, the community of believers) owned the local church (that is, the ecclesiastical property) as was true for much of history (and was *almost* the case in the U.S.); if repre-

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sentative laypeople were *voting* members of synods and councils, then the Don Timmermans would need have no fear of being excluded from church membership. For all indications are that in such a church lay influence would long ago have swept aside the many favorite clerical fetishes—from the ban on artificial contraception to the Druidic Order of priests, pure and set aside.

As we approach the third millennium, Catholic unity is obstructed not so much by the proleptic actions of the Don Timmermans as by the present un-Catholic, anti-Apostolic, a-historical constitution of the ecclesiastical *polis*, kept in place by an *ancien régime* but ready to fall at the first gust of fresh air. The whole debate over who may preside would be unnecessary if the faithful were to reassert their truly ancient role as the ultimate standard of Catholic orthodoxy against clerical obscurantism. Remember how "the faithful" got their name; long before the Roman See had won its unassailable hegemony, virtually the entire episcopacy of the Eastern church fell prey to the terribly "spiritual" heresy of Arianism; but the laity, living in the world of the flesh, remained *faithful*—against them.

THOMAS CAHILL

Bringing down the Worker

Logansport, Ind.

To the Editors: I was saddened and just plain irked to read of the controversial liturgies at the Catholic Worker founded Casa Maria in Milwaukee ["Dear Friends," September 9]. When Dorothy Day died, there was conjecture concerning how long the Catholic Worker movement could suirvive without her leadership. The personal integrity and self-discipline of Ms. Day kept the Worker on a straight if turbulent course. She stated on more than one occasion that if she were ever ordered to stop some action by a duly appointed authority in the church, she would cease and desist.

No movement is so successful that it is immune to "improvement" under the name of righteousness. It seems the dismantling of the Catholic Worker movement may have begun in Milwaukee.

BILL McTAGGART

Dissent the Day way

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Let it be said that it is a cause for rejoicing when persons of various religious beliefs join in meeting the needs of the homeless, hungry, and forsaken. When these works of mercy are carried out under the mantle of the Catholic Worker, it is not surprising that the group meets weekly for formal prayer. Such community prayer could take any number of forms.

Under the mantle of the Catholic Worker, however, it should not take the form of Masses presided over by women. Those who see certain church policies as unjust have the option to sever their connection with the institution.

The article by John Baldovin, S.J., nuanced and understanding, is a valuable contribution to the discussion. His distinction between the priest "presider" and the liturgical assembly itself as the "celebrant" is a much-needed one. He insists on the need for a real distinction between the baptized and the ordained, and on the need to accept the ordained.

In asserting that "for an individual community to ordain its own presiders on its own initiative would be to separate itself from the Catholic church," Baldovin is on rock-firm ground.

Such a point was made in communications with the Milwaukee Catholic Worker. The setting of the Catholic Worker for invalid Masses poses a danger to a movement whose founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, were completely obedient to the teachings of the Catholic church. . . .

Gordon Zahn cites the danger that the Milwaukee invalid liturgies may not only give scandal but provide the occasion for others to follow suit.

The second issue, highlighted by the exchange with the Milwaukee house, is that of the Catholic Worker's mission in the church, a mission that includes dissent. Dorothy Day dissented from the generally held tradition of the just war. Pacifism was hardly accepted as a tenable position. It brought Dorothy Day close to the three "historic peace churches": the Quakers, Mennonites, and Brethren. Day reminded Catholics

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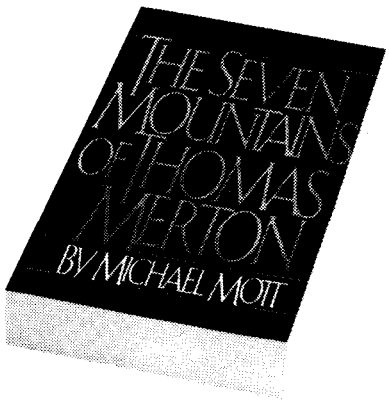

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that they, too, belonged to a "historic peace church," only one that reached further back into history. At the height of the Second World War, the *Worker* published dozens of peace statements from the early Church Fathers, including Clement of Alexandria.

Dorothy Day's dissent was not a rejection of established authority, but a position buttressed by the Sermon on the Mount, by the teachings of the Church Fathers, and by the witness of the soldier-martyrs of the Roman Empire.

Some persons, especially young people, joined themselves to the Catholic Worker in the belief that they had found a free-wheeling community which gave them the option of rejecting teachings of the church with which they happened to disagree. When this occurred, Dorothy soon disabused them of such a belief. . . . Attempts of persons to saddle the movement with their own agendas constitute a phenomenon with which most organizations have to deal. Not surprisingly, in over half-a-century of existence, the Catholic Worker has met this problem.

What course did Dorothy Day take when she disagreed with a tradition of the church? While the analogy is imperfect, Dorothy Day's response of "loving disagreement" is something to remember and cherish. She talked with priests and bishops, and took advantage of every opportunity to explain her commitment to Gospel nonviolence and conscientious objection to participation in war. During the Second Vatican Council, she fasted and prayed in Rome while the world's bishops were discussing peace and war. Earlier, we had sent an issue of the *Catholic Worker* carrying the peace message to every bishop in the world.

Those who feel strongly about any tradition or discipline of the church have the same means open to them as did Dorothy Day.

Those who wish to call themselves Catholics and wish to work under the mantle of the Catholic Worker movement can follow Dorothy Day in obedience, in patience, and in the witness of prayer and fasting.

A succeeding letter from the Milwaukee house stated, "If it would lead to less commotion to call our liturgies 'prayer meetings,' rather than 'Mass,' then so be it. We are not concerned over semantics. And we will call our liturgies 'prayer meetings' from now on."

I, for one, accept that this means that the "liturgies" are a community gathering for prayer, and do not refer to the central liturgy of the Catholic church, the sacrament of the Mass. EILEEN EGAN

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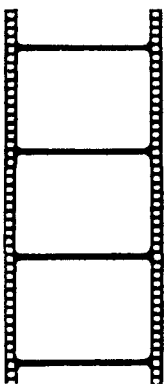

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Religion and the Life of the Intellect

In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

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